THE

HISTORY

OF

MATTHEW WALD.

WE TALKED WITH OPEN HEART, AND TONGUE
AFFECTIONATE AND TRUE:
A PAIR OF FRIENDS, THOUGH I WAS YOUNG,
AND MATTHEW SEVENTY-TWO.

WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.
MDCCCXXIV.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY JAMES BALLANTYNE AND CO.



THE HISTORY

OF

MATTHEW WALD.

CHAPTER I.

I NEED not begin this story, my dear, since it is addressed only to you, with a full account of my pedigree. You know the antiquity of the family, with which you are so closely connected. You are aware that we came into Scotland towards the middle of that interesting period, which learned people talk of under the name of "the Anglo-Saxon colonization." In fact, the tree was Norman originally, and had scarcely ta' root in England ere it was transplanted hither—where, upon the whole, it may be said to have thriven.

The estate which my ancestor received from King Robert's bounty was not indeed large but one or two prudent marriages augmented it considerably in the course of the century; and as the father and eldest son always adhered to the ancient rule of taking different sides on every occasion of public tumult and political dissension, while the younger branches were invariably portioned off with a sword or a crucifix, there was little chance of the barony's suffering any remarkable curtailment during several subsequent ages. We were so lucky as to see through all the abominable errors of the Popish system earlier than most of our neighbours, and our timely conversion was not unrewarded even in this world. We were also good enough to stick by the Covenant, so that although the estate was given to an English officer in 1679, we recovered it in 1688, much improved by the management he had bestowed on it. Besides hedges and ditches, before unimagined, he had built a good house, and furnished it in a handsome manner; and I have even heard it whispered, that there was some money in the cabinet, which he never had any

opportunity of claiming, otherwise than by letters from Spain,—for the gentleman was pleased to take service in that country immediately after the Revolution. At the commencement of the last century, then, our affairs may be said to have been rather in a prosperous condition.

My grandfather in due time succeeded to the property;—gave his hand to a young lady of great merit, who happened to be heiress of a farm that had often and often been talked of as lying in to the estate, and was now (it was indeed high time) legally united to it for ever; and in process of time begat a great many more sons and daughters than would have been at all consistent with prudence, had vaccination or cleanliness been at that period naturalized in our part of the globe.

They all died young, except John, Matthew, and Dorothy. The cadet was my father, and I need not inform you that you have the honour to be the lady's grandson.

As little need I tell you that The Union was, at the time when it took place, and long after indeed, extremely unpopular in this part of the island. Some few approved of it from the begin-

ning, because they were shrewd enough to foresee the benefits which it has eventually conferred upon commerce and younger brothers, and many more supported and applauded it for reasons of a more private nature. My grandfather despised the name of traffic, would have preferred to see five sons in their shrouds rather than one Wald in a furred gown and gold chain, and was too inconsiderable a person to be bribed, so that his voice was with the majority. And in this faith he religiously educated his children.

John, the first hope of the house, adhered to his father's prejudices; so firmly, indeed, that he even pushed matters considerably farther than the old gentleman's nerves would have approved of. In short, my uncle was one of those excellent protestants and patriots who quite forgot James II., in the immediate contemplation of Scotland degraded to a province of England. My father, on the other hand, was a soldier and a stout Hanoverian; and the two brothers first argued, then quarrelled, and ended with avoiding each other in calm and deliberate aversion. They had, though living scarcely ten miles apart, refrained entirely from

visiting each other during the three or four years that preceded my birth.

Both were men of stern temper and high passions. Each had married, each had become a parent—one (my father) had lost a wife in the interim; yet neither had, in joy or in sorrow, made the least advance towards a reconciliation. The two proud men were become strangers; they had hardened their hearts, and erased, to all appearance, every trace of sympathy.

My father had heard, without surprise, that the Laird had joined Charles Edward at Edinburgh, and gone with the Highland army into England. He had heard, also, that this proceeding was extremely disagreeable to his brother's wife, who, being a lady of the west country, abhorred the names of Pope and Pretender from her cradle; and who, moreover, was said to be, at this particular time, far advanced in a condition, which, however interesting and amiable, has never been celebrated for disarming contradiction of its sting.

At last came the full accounts of the catastrophe at Culloden. My father learned that his brother's

corps had been almost entirely put to the sword, and nobody dreamt that he, a man in all situations distinguished for violence of temperament, could have escaped the slaughter—unless, indeed, he had been disabled and made prisoner; a fate which, considering his station in life, and the feelings of an exasperated government, it was impossible not to regard as more cruel than any other.

The *second* day after he heard this news, my father mounted his horse and rode across the country, with a single servant, to Blackford. He found the house entirely deserted and shut up; and, calling on the minister of the parish, was informed that the lady had removed to Edinburgh two or three weeks ago, with her infant daughter, in the utmost distress of mind.—The total desolation of the old place affected the Captain a good deal, and he came home at night-fall in a gloomy mood.

The night, as it happened, set in wet and stormy after his return. He had supped, and was sitting alone by the fireside about eleven o'clock, when he heard some noise at the window; he thought it was the plashing of the rain, and did

not turn round until the knock was repeated. The shutters were not closed, and he saw distinctly a human figure—pale, haggard, motionless, with a long beard and a grisly gash upon the brow. At the first glance he knew it was Blackford, but he stared for a moment without rising from his chair, for it was his belief that his brother was no longer in life.

The Laird threw up the window, however, and my father assisted him into the room. He staggered into his embrace without saying anything; and several minutes elapsed ere my father perceived what was the reality of the case. The poor man had been wounded on the head, and the subsequent exposure and hardship he had undergone had at last quite unshaken his mind. He eat and drank voraciously, (they had not presence of mind to restrain this;) talked incoherently and wildly of his family and the battle; in short, became utterly delirious,—and died in that state in the course of the next day. I have a distinct recollection, young as I was, of my uncle's funeral leaving the house. I suppose I had cried in my bed, and the maid carried me to the window be-

cause she was resolved not to lose the sight herself. I remember the dark stormy night, and several figures on horseback, with torches in their hands, about a cart. They carried him to the vault at Blackford, and it was not thought prudent to do this in the day time.

Some days after, an embroidered cap and a silk handkerchief were found in the bog, about a mile behind our house; and from different circumstances which subsequently came to my father's knowledge, he was convinced that his brother had been concealed there for two entire nights before he made his appearance at the window. If this was really the case, it is impossible to imagine anything more miserable—at least I have seen a good many bogs in my time, and certainly none to compare to that. I cannot suppose that a snipe ever staid willingly four-and-twenty hours within its verge.

When you go to that part of the world, they will shew you, if you have any curiosity, the very spot where the Laird's nightcap was found. As for the relic itself, it is now in my possession, and a very pretty nightcap, I assure you, it has been—

nothing less than green satin, and silver flowers. A heart *proper*, stuck through with darts and arrows, adorns the middle of the crown; from which I conclude that the finery had originally been donned in honour of his wedding-night.

CHAPTER II.

My father, having distinguished himself on more occasions than one when in the army, and retired from it only in consequence of losing his right arm at Portobello, was possessed of influence enough to obtain for himself a free gift (fees of office not included) of his brother's forfeited estate from the King. The house which he had hitherto occupied was a hired one, and he now removed to Blackford—not, however, until he had gone to Edinburgh, and invited his brother's widow to come and place herself and her child there under his protection. I remember something of our *flitting*, but cannot pretend that I have any *first impressions* about my aunt at your service. I grew up from the verge of infancy under her eye, and should as soon think of saying what my earliest notions were about my own father.

She was only five-and-twenty when her husband died; yet I cannot recal any time at which I did not regard her as an old woman. The widow's costume, no doubt, must bear the chief blame of this; for she that looks young in that abominable close coif and mufflers must indeed be a Hebe. But it is not to be denied, that this lady preserved, during the first years of our acquaintance, a steady coldness, reserve, and mortification of aspect and demeanour, more than sufficient, even if she had been arrayed in all the colours of the rainbow, to impress eyes so young as mine with all the notion of antiquity.

It is certain, that, upon the whole, the Captain and his sister-in-law agreed very well together in the conduct of their joint *menage*; but it is also certain, that, although little Katharine found a father in mine, I never felt as if I possessed a mother in hers. Every sort of care was bestowed on me, and every appearance of kindness; but it is impossible to deceive a child in some things. I always, from the very beginning, (at least I now think so,) perceived what a difference there was in her style of caressing me and my cousin.

I believe, indeed, it was not very long ere I began to have some idea that my father and my aunt were not, at the bottom of their hearts, quite so tender friends as they were generally supposed to be. It is impossible to say from what such a notion might have originally sprung. Some single look, perhaps, some one tone, some ineffectual smile, or husky whisper, may have been sufficient; for I am satisfied that we at those years pick up a great many strange things from a species of instinct, of which we afterwards lose the use, and sometimes without replacing it by anything half so good.

My father, however, had been a man of camps and ships, and it is but fair to say, that I know him to have been considerably addicted to profane modes of expression, and by no means so strict as he should have been in his attendance at church. These were faults of which my aunt must at all times have had a profound abhorrence; and perhaps the necessity she was, or might suppose herself to be under, of concealing some of her feelings as to these matters, had had the effect of exaggerating their natural bitterness.

The Captain, whatever his own faults were, did not at least interfere with his sister-in-law as to our early education. As soon as we were able to walk, little Kate and I were carried every Sunday to church, where we remained at my aunt's side, until the service, which seldom occupied less than five hours on end, was over. The business of committing psalms and whole chapters of the Bible to memory divided the evening of that day with the Assembly's Catechism—a study by no means likely to engage the imagination of tender years. To cast a single glance upon any book not strictly devotional was looked upon as a most heinous offence; we were not even permitted to take a turn in the garden. In a word, my father generally spent that day of the week abroad, and it was rendered, by every possible contrivance, a very miserable one to us at home.

When we were old enough, we were sent together every day to the parish school, where we were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and I some Latin besides, in the same room with about a score of the country people's children of both sexes. Young Blackford, however, (so I was

called,) and his cousin, were not without some marks of distinction at this seminary. We sat together on a long stool somewhat elevated above the others; and the master had orders to send the lady notice if he should ever detect us in joining our ignobler fellows at their games. But this last regulation there was of course considerable difficulty in enforcing—not the less so, because the schoolmaster was sand-blind, and a cripple into the bargain. We always could hear the poor body's crutches long before he could see us; and I dare say he did not much lament this particular effect of his infirmity. He was, in truth, a good simple creature, who combined the most genuine benevolence and kindness towards all about him, with the ludicrous conceptions of his own importance, proper to his character and profession. His old mother lived at the other end of the cottage, and seldom a day passed without her leaving her wheel once or twice, that she might come into the school-room, and refresh her eyes with the contemplation of his glory. On such occasions the worthy soul cocked his night-cap, sat up more erect in his chair, and rolled out his

vocables in a tone of more awful authority. The old woman seemed to be particularly fond of visiting us when we were at our Latin; and I have seen the tears gush from her eye when her son thundered forth some sublime fragment of the *Propria quæ maribus*. He had, indeed, a fine voice, and was a capital precentor.

One day in the week was sacred to liberty and joy; even at these years I am not sure that I do not still rise on Saturday with feelings different from those of any other morning; so deep is the impression such early associations of happiness may bequeath. Those long long summer days flew over our heads as if hours had been minutes. The hillside, where Katharine and I wandered, hand in hand, among the broom and the hawthorns—the clear stream, in which we were never weary of dabbling—the turfen houses that we built—the boats that we sailed—the old spaniel that was everywhere with us—the ponies which we rode barebacked—the little gardens that were our own gardens, and which my father used to give us the assistance of his one arm in cultivating—all these objects are as vividly before me now as if they were

but things of yesterday. I believe I might safely say much more so.

And yet my Saturdays were not all happy.

I was about ten years old when a calamity, which I had scarcely sense enough to comprehend the misery of, befell me. My father had been complaining for some weeks of headaches and languor, and had not been much out of doors. A delightful evening tempted him, and he came into the garden to enjoy the sunset from his favourite bower. My aunt had her work in her lap—Katharine was on his knee, and I was sitting at his foot reading Blind Harry aloud to them all, when suddenly, in a single moment, my father groaned aloud, and fell back in his chair speechless. His face was blackening. My aunt screamed to me immediately to run for the doctor—and the village being within sight, I never stopt till I was at his door. He ran faster than I had done, and by the time I reached our gate again I heard voices weeping. All was over. I sprung up stairs, and entered the room. He was lying half undressed upon his bed. There were a few beads of blood on his temple, where they had been trying to cup him—but never

shall I forget the change that was on the face. My father had been a very full-blooded man, the cheeks, and, indeed, the whole countenance almost, of a dark red colour, the general expression fiery and vehement. But now, marble could not have been paler, nor any features carved in marble more serene. In truth, I should never have known it to be the same face—every line was softened, every passion asleep. I feel now, in thinking of it, somewhat of the same awe that checked my tears from flowing at the moment. I stared on the dead body with helpless terror, as if it had been some fearfully placid thing seen in a dream. I remember sobbing myself asleep that night, and when I awoke in the morning, my aunt was sitting by my bedside, with little Katharine weeping and lamenting on her knee.

My father had been much respected, and all the gentry of the country, along with our own tenants and neighbours, came to his funeral. God forgive me! but in the midst of all my sorrow for my father, I was not without some feelings of pride and consequence, (little wretch that I was,) when I saw the respect that every one treated me with.

Some of the foolish servants had taken strange ways to comfort me, and some of their vile stuff had stuck by me, even while I thought I abhorred it.

I was soon punished. After we came back from the church, they examined my father's repositories, in case there should be any will—and I have understood since, that almost everybody was astonished when they discovered one. You may suppose what they thought of it, when it was found that my father had settled the estate free and entire upon Katharine—burthened, however, with the original jointure to her mother—just, in short, as if there had never been either a rebellion or a forfeiture;—and that his own original patrimony, as a younger brother of Blackford, was all that remained for his own son.

I was told of this the same evening by an old friend of my father's, the then Graname of Bogtoun. He saw that I was able to understand him, and he explained the whole matter to me; and I must now do myself the justice to say, that when it was explained, I was completely satisfied. "Your father," said this ancient gentleman, "has indeed

acted like a gentleman, a soldier, and a brother; and in the upshot, my lad, it will be all as well for you." I went to my own room, however, and to bed, immediately after he had done speaking with me.

About the middle of the next day I was sitting by myself at the side of the river, when I found a soft little hand put suddenly into mine. It was Katharine. "My dear Matthew," said the child, "do you know they say it's not that you're to be the Laird, but that I'm to be the Lady. But how can that be, when you know it was always said about the house that we were to be married when we turned man and woman? Are you not going to be my goodman now, Matthew? I'm sure it would anger my uncle (she whispered the words, poor little thing,) if he heard you say that."

But enough of children and their talk. We were both sent to school again next day, and were catching butterflies together on our way home.

CHAPTER III.

A FEW years after my father's death the old minister of our parish died, and a preacher, who had been tutor in the patron's family, came to us in his place. The new minister was a strong, athletic, handsome, dark man, of perhaps five-and-thirty, with an aspect very severe, stern, and knotty in the pulpit, but out of it, as we soon had occasion to see, capable of being considerably softened. When he spoke with his full voice the effect was harsh; but he had a whispering undertone that was rather mild and engaging; and, when he smiled, a set of fine large white teeth shewed to much advantage beside his close-shaven black beard. There was something of the commanding in the air and manner of this divine, and a great deal of the coarse.

He soon became a great favourite with my aunt. She was charmed with his sermons first.

and afterwards with his company; and it was proposed that he should come over to Blackford three times a-week to give me my lessons, as I was now getting rather too old for the village school. He agreed to this, and Katharine became his pupil also.

He was a good scholar; and, whatever his natural temper might be, he managed it so that we liked him very well as our preceptor. During the winter, he slept much oftener at our house than at the manse, and, in short, was almost a part of the family. My aunt's black bombazeen made way for a grey gown about this time; and, ere that was quite worn out, she chose to change her name also, and became Mrs Mather.

This event, strange but true, produced at the time no unpleasant feelings in my mind, nor I believe in my cousin's. The fact of the matter is, that Mr Mather had made himself highly agreeable to us both. He gave us our lessons in a pleasant manner; and often, when we had committed any little offence, he had interfered with my aunt in our behalf. Besides, we had never heard him spoken of except with the utmost reverence of re-

spect and admiration by those about us, and would not have dared to think it possible that that should be a wrong thing in which he was concerned.

Moreover, we got each of us a new suit of clothes, and several little presents, upon the occasion.

My aunt (for I shall still call her so) was now much more occupied than she had used to be; one consequence of which was, that we enjoyed greater freedom for our juvenile diversions. When at home, she was fonder of sitting with her husband than of watching us; and they frequently visited abroad, she travelling on a pillion behind him, as was then the fashion. Within no long space she had twins; and then the care of the children became a constant employment to her.

The Minister, meantime, had made a great step in life, and it was not long ere, among other symptoms of importance, he began to give me my lessons in a style much different from that which had at first conciliated my affections; I felt that he was no longer the same person, and my temper was not naturally of the most submissive order. But lessons, where the Teacher *is* really the Master, seldom occupy a great deal of time; and, the ap-

pointed penance over, for the rest of the day Kate and I were left very much to ourselves. We used often to ride many miles away from Blackford, and spend hours and hours together among the hills, where every green sequestered glen, and beautiful pastoral streamlet, became familiar to us. We would take some bread and cheese with us, and, setting our ponies loose to graze among the fern, remain half a summer's day sporting as we pleased beside some remote waterfall. If we staid out too late, we were sure to be scolded when we returned; but I must confess this circumstance was often forgotten by both of us.

One day, we had laid our bridles on our ponies' necks in the old way, and were as usual amusing ourselves at some little distance from the place where they were feeding, when a number of gentlemen happened to come up the glen a hare-hunting, and we, without thinking of our ponies, stood looking at them till they were gone down the hill again. Half an hour might have passed ere we took any thought about the ponies, and then we were not a little disconcerted to find them gone. We sought them for a long time among the winding glens,

and all up many different streams; but at last met with a shepherd lad, who told us, he had seen them both driving away at full speed westwards, and had in vain endeavoured to catch them. We now perceived that the noise of the dogs and the whistles had frightened them; and, as the country was quite open, reflected, with some concern, that they would get to Blackford long before us without interruption; for as to their running anywhere else, the little creatures were so completely members of the family that that notion never even entered our heads.

We were full five miles from home, and the sun was already in the west. We ran and walked time about as fast as we were able, but it was quite dark long before we got home; and, when we reached the avenue, we found one of the hinds with a lantern in his hand returning from looking for us. I shall never forget the stern looks we were met with when we entered the parlour. The Minister was sitting by the fire-side, my aunt opposite to him with one of the children on her lap, and I saw that her eyes were red, as if she had been crying.

"So, young gentleman," said Mr Mather, sitting bolt upright, and grasping an arm of his elbow-chair firmly in each hand;—"So, sir, this is the way in which you abuse our indulgence. How often has this behaviour been overlooked? Sir, you shall find, that my wife and family are not always to be treated in this fashion with impunity."

"Oh, my dear," said the lady, "be calm. Consider a little ere you do anything."

"Calm!" quoth he, "yes indeed, my love, shall be calm enough.—Well, I will let the night be over ere I do anything."

"Do?" said I; (his voice and look had maddened me;) "what do you talk of? I'm sorry we're so late;—but what is all this *doing* for?"

"Do you brave me, sirrah?" said he, and his eyes flashed.

I made him no answer.

"To your room, sir!—to your room!" cried he, and stamped violently on the floor.

I did not stay to be bidden twice, but made directly for the door.

"And you, miss," I heard him continue, "I

must say, this is pretty behaviour in a young lady. What has torn your frock?—Upon my word, Mrs Mather, the girl is getting a great deal too old for this sort of thing. She will be a woman ere long.—Come hither, Katharine, and tell me what you have been doing with yourselves."

The room was a long one, and I had time to hear so much ere I gained the end of it. I looked round from the door, and saw Katharine sobbing, with her hands on her face, before them. Her long jet black hair was hanging in silken ringlets, sorely entangled, over her shoulders. I saw that some thorn had wounded her beautiful white arm in our flight, for it was bleeding. A new feeling of wrath sprung up at that moment within my bosom; but I was forced to gulp it all down, and bury myself in my bed-clothes as soon as I could.

I remembered, after I had been some time in bed, that I had not said my prayers, and got up, and knelt on the floor; but some improper thoughts crowded into my mind the moment I was in that posture, and I flung myself into my bed again without being able to do what I had intended.

CHAPTER IV.

I WAS roused out of my sleep at peep of day by a shake at my collar, and saw Mr Mather; who, in a voice of the utmost composure, desired me to get up immediately. He took me by the hand, and, without letting me put on anything but my shoes, led me down stairs, and so out to the orchard behind the house. He did not say a word to me until we were in the midst of the trees. He then took a handkerchief out of one pocket, and a small riding whip out of the other, and, seizing my two hands in one of his, began to cast a knot over them with his handkerchief.

My aunt had often corrected me in former days, but not recently, and Mr Mather had never before offered to strike me even with his hand; so that my surprise at this behaviour was as great as

my indignation. I said to him, almost choking, "Unhand me, sir! What do you mean?—Who are you, that you should treat me thus?"

He made no answer, but bound my arms above my head to a bough of a tree, and flung my shirt over my face. I resisted with all my might, but I was now blinded, and I only once bit him, and that not until I had kicked both my shoes off.—He drew his whip lightly once or twice over my back, and then laid on three several deliberate stripes, that cut the skin clean through, from the nape of the neck downwards. I screamed out at the first blow, but stood shivering in mute rage under the two last.

"This will teach you to brave me again," he whispered in my ear;—and I heard his footsteps retreating.

A minute after, the footman came out of the house and unbound me. I was shaking all over, and the lad half led, half carried me, to my room, where he made me swallow a glass of water, and put me to bed again. He sat by me until my back had stopped bleeding, and then dressed it for me with a little linen and lard, in vain endeavouring

all the while to get me into any talk whatever. Seeing that I was preparing to dress myself he now left me; upon which I put on my clothes, stole down stairs as gently as I could, caught my pony, and saddled him, and so off to the hill as hard as my heels could make him gallop.

I had been several hours on the hill ere I thought of anything but my rage—but I now began to feel very hungry, and thought I might as well go down to a village which I saw below me, and get some breakfast from an acquaintance whose house was there. Accordingly down I came; but just as I was turning the corner into the village, whom should I meet but Mr Mather. I was close at his side ere I saw him. He was in his whiskey, (our great man had brought one from Edinburgh with him after the last General Assembly,) driving a very tall and bony white horse, which had once been my father's favourite. He stopped the moment he saw me, and called out, "Here, sir! I desire you will go home, and *instantly*. Do not imagine that these monkey tricks are to go on any farther—Home, sir, I say, home!" I reined up my pony, and answered him, grinding

my teeth as I spoke, that I would follow my own fancy, not his; and that I did not know what he talked of as my *home*. The proud priest made a cut at me with his whip, and though I sprung my horse to one side as quickly as possible, the end of the lash hit me sharply across the face, just below the eyes.

I had a gulley-knife in my pocket, and I instantly, unclasping it, made my pony leap past him, and seized the rein at his horse's head. He saw my design, and lashed at me furiously, but I took it all, and divided the leather close by the bit. I then gave the old horse a bitter cut or two under the belly with my switch, and reinforcing this with the utmost power of my voice, saw him fly, as if seven devils were within him, right through the village.

I gallopped my pony after him, and enjoyed his shouts of alarm, until he was past the houses. A moment after his wheel took a huge lump of coal that was lying on the road, and I saw him projected into the heart of a quickset hedge, from which he rebounded into the ditch. I saw that he lay quite motionless, and hearing people be-

hind me, leaped the hedge myself, and regained the hill.

I got into the wildest part of the moor ere I stopped, and then sat down on a stone to consider with myself what was to be done. I had revolved many different plans, of going to Glasgow, to Edinburgh, and I know not what, when suddenly the thought struck me that it was very likely the Minister was dead, and if so, that I was certainly a murderer. Upon the first flash of this I got to my pony again, and rode further into the heath, convincing myself more and more, as I went on, that the thing must be so. I had tasted nothing since yesterday's noon, and my throat and lips were dry with exhaustion and agitation. It was a dark October day—how different from yesterday was the lowering sky! The wind began to howl over the heath, and everything looked gloomy, far and near. I thought of my aunt and the children, and cursed myself for what I had done. I thought I should have no peace anywhere, and that the only thing I could do was to surrender myself, and take whatever might come.

I was riding slowly homeward with this inten-

tion, when two men, farm servants of our own, came up with me, and made me their prisoner, without resistance. They told me the Minister was not dead, but sadly hurt—and something of my burden was taken off; but they would say little more, and seemed to regard me with a sort of horror as they walked by me, one on each side of the pony. Seeing this, I did not much trouble them with questions, but sat doggedly in my saddle, suffering them to take the whole management of the animal. On reaching Blackford—it was now twilight—I was led at once into the presence of my aunt, who received me, to my infinite astonishment, with very much her usual manner, somewhat more seriously, perhaps, but not a whit more sternly. She signed to me to sit down, and I obeyed her. "Matthew," said she, "you expect severity here, but you will find yourself quite mistaken. You have not done a boy's trick to-day, and are not to be treated as if you had. Consider with yourself, and I hope God will touch your heart, and enable you to be thankful that my bairns are not fatherless. You have been starving on the hill all day—eat your supper, Matthew,

and go to your bed, and we will see what is to be said to-morrow."

With this she went out of the room, leaving me alone. I eat a crust of dry bread, drank some milk, and got into my bed immediately. The lad who had dressed my back for me came in some time after, and looked at it again. He satisfied me that there was no danger in the minister's case: he had been stunned and bruised; but they had bled him directly, and he was now asleep, without symptoms of fever. Notwithstanding all this, however, you may suppose I had no very easy night. It was no ordinary day that had passed, and I lay under the oppression of indistinct expectations.

CHAPTER V.

The next day and the next again passed as if nothing had happened, except that Mr Mather kept his room, and both his wife and Katharine were almost always up stairs. With the latter, indeed, I had no opportunity of holding any private conversation; but the constraint and unhappiness of her looks were sufficiently marked by me, and I believe by all the house besides. On the third morning, a note was put into my hands as I was getting up. It was in my aunt's handwriting, and consisted of a single sentence, which I believe I can give you *verbatim*:—"It is Mr Mather's desire, that, when he appears to-day, nothing whatever may be said in allusion to late events, nor ever henceforth. Observe this for the sake of us all. M. M."

I determined to adhere to this rule most rigidly; and on entering the breakfast parlour, saluted Mr Mather, who was already seated at the table, as nearly as was possible in the same manner I should have done a week before. He also dissembled, though not—any more than myself, it is probable—with perfect success. He smiled, and said his "good morning" in much his usual note; and once or twice during breakfast asked for bread, salt, &c. from me, with an air of great indifference. But how deadly pale was his cheek! and once or twice when my glance was drawn towards him suddenly and furtively, I saw the fire that was glowing deep down in his fixed eyeballs, and marked the quivering malice that struggled with a faint smile upon his lips. The blood he had lost had evidently had a considerable effect on his nerves as well as his complexion; for I have seen him play his part in situations of this kind in much superior style.

The Minister said prayers after breakfast, according to custom, and withdrew immediately to his own room, without saying a word about *lessons* —in fact, I heard no more about anything of the

sort for several weeks. Katharine, however, told me that hers were going on in the old way. She whispered this to me one day when I met her on the staircase with her book in her hand. Poor Katharine! her eyes were often red. She did not come out and play or walk with me any more; but I saw well enough what was at the bottom of all this. My aunt was always civil.

But I am talking nonsense, John. Why should I attempt to make you comprehend things that necessarily require a sense of their own—a sense of which, I am sure, you are fortunate enough to be entirely destitute?—I might as well expect the bird on the tree to be up to all the little minute miseries of one in a cage, as you to understand anything worth the mentioning of what it is to be *the* boy in an unkind house. I am not thinking of the drumstick that was my share of the barn-door fowl, nor of the outside slices of the rounds of beef, nor of the *no* fat, nor even of the scanty plateful—though even to these contemptibles I was no stranger; but what think ye of the sudden change—a change made once and for ever though—from Matthew (sometimes Mat) to *Mis-*

ter Matthew, or perhaps, for variety's sake, *Mister* Wald?—It was this mixture of boy's treatment and man's treatment that did the most to madden me—this solemn civility of insult, mixt up with the most odious petty meannesses. I had heard, I know not from whom, when Mather first came to the parish, that his father was a barber. Conceive how often this recurred to me now—conceive how I grinded my teeth, as I lay counting hour after hour through the night, upon the sweet idea, that I was trodden under foot by the spawn of a village shaver—that he had whipped me—that I had borne the marks of him upon my back! Conceive the intense perceptions I now had of his ineradicable baseness—conceive the living disgust that crept through me whenever he coughed or sneezed—above all, when he laughed. His slow, deliberate, loud, brazen, Ha!—ha!—ha!—what a sound that was! His fine large white teeth seemed to me as if they belonged to some overgrown unclean beast—some great monstrous rat. Every, the very least motion, spoke whole volumes of filth. What exquisite vulgarity did I not see in his broad flat nails, bitten to the quick! I thought

I could have told what he was merely by the coarseness of his skin!—And all this time, a distant, serene, hauteur of politeness, forsooth!—"Mister Matthew's plate.—Perhaps Mr Wald would like a little of so and so.—My dear, would you see what Mr Wald is doing."—I can never make you comprehend the five millionth part of what I suffered during this period. There was a sort of half-choking feeling about my throat that I shall never describe. Anger, rage, contempt, scorn, hatred,—you may have known all these; but I can scarcely give you the credit of having *loathed!*—That is my word—that was my feeling. I was *under* this man. That is the point. I used to dream of seeing him planted chin-deep in mud—pelted with filth and vermin! I know not what abominations passed through my mind. Yes, I once laughed myself awake at seeing him spinning round under a gibbet,—gown, bands, and all!

Even their children were no longer the same to me. I had used to be extremely fond of one of them—the little boy. He was often brought into my room, before I was up in the morning, to play with me in my bed, and hear my horrible attempts

upon the fiddle, for I was just beginning it then. This little fellow now pouted whenever I spoke to him; and once, when he was brought into the room where we were all sitting together after dinner, I saw him eye me for a moment, and then shrink into his mother's bosom, and heard him mumble something in her ear about putting away "Bad Mat." You may suppose that I gave up my pet upon this.

The lessons were resumed after a time; but they were now given with almost as much indifference as they were received with.—I only wonder, when I think of the whole scene, that it should have lasted for better than a year.—Within doors I had absolutely no comfort, none: without, I had no companion but my cousin: and I did not now dare to be so happy as I had used to be even when I was alone with her. Bad feelings and passions were gradually eating into my very soul.

One day, about this time, I received a note inviting me to dine at Carbrax, the house of an old crony of my father's, a Major Vans. Carbrax had had, of late years, comparatively little intercourse with Blackford; but that was no business of mine.

So I carried the billet in my hand, and, presenting it to Mr Mather, asked him as respectfully as I could, whether I might accept the invitation. He, happening to be in a good humour for once, read the note, and said he was surprised I should have thought it necessary to put such a question. "Certainly,—by all means.—What reason could there possibly be for my refusing?"

The place is some six miles farther down the river, so I went on horseback; and, as I expected some coursing or fishing, I went early in the day. The Major, however, did not come home till dinner-time; and then, not a little to my surprise, I found that he had a large party, all gentlemen, or men at least, (for he was an old bachelor,) and myself the only young person in the room.

What a difference between this congress of bon-vivants, and the staid domestic parson's-grey circle at Blackford! The old Major was a notorious humorist; and I suppose everybody thought an invitation to his house was a signal that Momus and Bacchus were come down to be the lords of earth for the night. His own most extraordi-

nary face—how bright is it before me at this moment! That long trumpet-nose, blown up with every possible modification of alcohol,—the old leering, winking, cunning eyes,—the enormous watery lips,—and the highly powdered toupee!—The whole of the party seemed to be trying to do their best; but with him there was no effort. He sat easy, unconstrained, inimitable,—the incarnation of drollery.

A sheep's-head at the head of the table, a mountain of salted beef at the bottom, and a huge dish of boiled carrots in the middle, formed the dinner. But there was considerable variety of liquors; champaigne flying about like small beer,—hock, in black bottles of the most extraordinary shapes, —and claret in great pewter jugs, which an old, squinting, gouty butler replenished every now and then from a barrel that stood upon a couple of chairs in the corner of the room.

I was tipsy immediately; but I remember enough of my folly to make me blush at this moment when I think of myself. The half-crazy old good-for-nothing had heard of the story of the whiskey, and nothing would serve him but that I

should tell it in my own way to the company. The fool, his brain boiling with champaigne, did this *absque mora*; and then what laughter, what cheering, what huzzaing!—I have a very indistinct recollection of what followed; but I think it is very likely, that there had not been a single wild dream in my head for many months back that these hoary reprobates did not suck out of me. I was soon totally drunk; and, when I awoke next morning, was by no means in a hurry to perceive that I was not in my own bed.

When I did so, however, I got up immediately, and rode home before breakfast. Guess my feelings, when, coming into the parlour, I saw a stranger sitting with the family, and recognized one of the Major's jolly companions of the preceding night. My heart smote me that moment. I never for a moment doubted, but that he had made a full report of all the folly which had been revealing itself to my own remembrance bit by bit as I rode on, and the wind cleared my head of its fumes. You may suppose, that I was at any rate not very likely to make a good hand at the breakfast-table that morning. I ate nothing, drank

whatever was within my reach, and rushed out immediately afterwards to bathe in the river.

I was sent for, in the course of the afternoon, to speak with Mr Mather in his study, where I had not recently been a visitor. He was smoking when I went in; and, taking his pipe from his mouth, told me in three words, and with an air of the most perfect calmness, that he had written some time ago to a friend of his at St Andrews, that he had received an answer that morning, and that it was his and Mrs Mather's wish, that I should set off next morning for that university. I asked no questions, and signified my assent in as few words as I could make use of. He then resumed his pipe, and I retired in a considerable flurry, as you may imagine.

When I came to my own room, I found my aunt there busy arranging my linen, along with one of the maids. I staid beside them, and packed up my little wardrobe in silence. Some time after they were gone, Katharine tapped at my door, and came in with a face full of woe, the marks of tears visible all down her cheeks, and scarcely able to speak three syllables without a

sob. She put a little red psalm-book into my hand, and said I must keep it for her sake, and always think of old days when I was in church with it. I kissed Kate, both our eyes swimming; and she ran hastily out of my room, for she heard some footstep on the stair-case. Katharine was always sent early to bed, and did not appear again that night, so this little minute was all our parting.

I dare say, Mather and his wife had in reality planned this journey some time before; but I have as little doubt that it was hastened in consequence of what had been reported of my folly at Carbrax. They were of course annoyed with the notion of being the sport of the country; and the person who carried the story to them, a little electioneering pettifogger, as I afterwards discovered, was not likely to have softened the matter in his narrative.

I met old Vans many years afterwards in Edinburgh, and found that my juvenile adventure with the Minister's whiskey had had the honour to become one of his standing stories. He coupled it generally with a grand achievement of his own, which, it seems, finished the jovial evening of

which I had been fortunate enough to witness the commencement.

The party I had seen assembled that day at his table consisted, it appears, chiefly of the ruling senators of a neighbouring royal burgh, which was destined to be, on the morning afterwards, the scene of a contested election. The Major, after he had made his guests tolerably merry, (I had been put to bed long ere this,) proposed to shew them a fine coal-pit in the immediate vicinity of his mansion. The worthy deacons and bailies were up to anything, and the frolic took. As soon, however, as the whole party had descended, the bucket was once more elevated from above, and the Major, as they contemplated it dangling upwards, told them, with a most benignant smile, that he had not brought them into the bowels of the earth for nothing. In short, they found, upon advancing into a more airy part of the excavation, a table and chairs set out in regular order, candles stuck against the coal wall, and the Major's hogshead of claret cunningly removed from his dining-room in the upper regions for their entertainment. Rebellion was evidently hopeless; so,

after a deal of vain lamentation and abuse, the trusty magistrates made the best of a bad bargain, and sat contentedly until their host was pleased to release them,—which, it is unnecessary to add, was not until the hour of election was long over, and the Major's ally chaired in all form and glory.

The bailies must have been sensible in the end that the Major had done them no very serious injury with all this manœuvring. They had already pocketed, no doubt, the fees of the one candidate, and they now were obliged to the rival interest for a hearty soaking; nay, the malicious world even whispered, that they had discovered a vein of something very pretty in the region of the black diamonds.

CHAPTER VI.

There was only one circumstance to alloy in any degree the pleasure with which I bade adieu for the first time to the roof of my fathers. But I have no wish to be sentimental, so let me remove myself at once to the most ancient seat of the Northern Muses.

I travelled the first stage in the patched up whiskey, (for it had been sorely shattered,) under the guidance of the ploughman; and then, bidding adieu to him at the county town, pursued the journey, riding post.

I sought out immediately on my arrival the learned Professor to whom my letters were addressed, and found a room already prepared for me in his house, which was situated within the walls of one of the Colleges. My new guardian was a dull, solemn, perfectly good-natured orientalist, who, after

he had seen me gowned, matriculated, and introduced to the classes I was to attend, seemed to think that he had done all that was necessary. His housekeeper was a maiden sister, turned of thirty, extremely different from him in everything, lively, affable, a great manager, knowing in the cookery book, and the best maker of a little noggin of hot punch I have ever met with to this hour.

Two young students, besides myself, were boarded in the house; and certainly we had no reason to complain of our fare. Except at meal-times, we were our own masters; nobody gave us the least trouble: And I must say, that, in our turn, we were good boys, and gave them, on the whole, as little annoyance, or disturbance of any kind, as could reasonably have been expected. Miss Patterson often praised us all for our behaviour; but I was her favourite. She had been very pretty, and was still very good-looking, though rather too fat, and rubicund. She liked to have a young gentleman to attend her when she walked out on the streets: and though the plainest of the three, I was selected for this more frequently than

any of the others. Sometimes we even extended our promenades into the country—In short, we became prodigious friends. She was fond of sentiment and poetry; I flattered her on her taste: and, in return, she flattered me on my parts, ay, and, ludicrous as the notion may appear to you, even on my person. This last amused even myself at first; but, though I smiled at her in my sleeve, I am ashamed to say that her compliments nevertheless took effect. I am quite conscious that her words first blew into life that spark of coxcombry, which I suppose few bosoms of that age do not either shew or conceal. She chose my waistcoats for me; made me have my hair dressed according to the fashion; carried me with her to the principal tea parties of the place; and openly, upon every occasion, called the little cross-made hero her dear beau.

By help of so much oil, my rustic awkwardnesses were gradually rubbing themselves off; and, taking courage to flirt one evening with a pretty girl of more tender age, the monkey asked me, with a face of brass, if it was true that I was to be mar-

ried to Miss Biddy; adding, with a compassionate sigh, that she hoped the report was true, for everybody might see how much we were in love with each other.

The sarcasm did not escape my observation, and I made no reply, except by a laugh; but, for all this, what she had said was far from being forgotten as soon as I had heard it. On the contrary, my boyish vanity began to expand itself, forsooth, into a world of most fantastic ideas; and I had the vice to think, that, however misplaced the lady's fancy might be in respect of years, still she had so far shewn judgment in the midst of her absurdity. Every little kindness I had received, however innocent, however amiable, was now recalled to serve as the pin for some most egregious commentary of self-complacency. I remarked, as we went home that very night, how heavily she leant upon my arm—set down every short-drawn breath (that is to say, every other one she drew, for, as I have mentioned, she was a fat little beauty) for a soul-heaved sigh of passion; and, in short, dreamt of nothing all night, but Cleopatras and Didos. The best of the whole joke

was, that I persuaded myself to regard the matter quite in a serious point of view: in the very acme and ecstasy of self-love, I flattered myself that pity was by much the ruling feeling within me; and completed my folly by the exquisite affectation of making a solemn resolution to look cold and distantly henceforth upon my inamorata, if perchance that benign cruelty might serve to eradicate by degrees the pardonable passion which my perfections had unconsciously planted in this too susceptible bosom. Was ever such a puppy!

I was in the midst of these fine airs, and I really know not how much farther I might have carried the absurdity, when I was seized with a scarlet fever, which, though I believe I never was thought to be absolutely in danger, confined me for three weeks to my bed, and left me as weak as a shadow. During the whole of my illness, Miss Patterson attended upon me as if I had been a brother or a son; and I confess, that, as I was recovering, I could not see her creeping about the room, and mixing her jellies and cordials, without my heart smiting me for having been capable of

thinking a disrespectful thought of one who looked so like a mother to me: But I was destined to be still farther rebuked.

I was sitting up one night, supported with pillows, when Miss Patterson came in with some tea, and sat down on the opposite side of the fire while I was sipping it. She looked kindly at me for some minutes, without saying anything, and then began to *hem* with some little awkwardness of manner, as if there was something at the end of her tongue which she yet found some difficulty in uttering. I believe, as I observed her confusion, some of my old fancies were near germinating again; but at last she began. "I hope you will soon be on your legs now again, Mr Matthew," said she; "and do you know I have a very particular reason for wishing this; for—but don't laugh when I tell you—do you know I am going—to—to—to change—my—my condition."

I was struck dumb; but she was blushing and looking down, and did not notice it until I gathered myself up, and made shift to say, I was happy, very happy to hear of it, and to ask if I

might not be favoured with the name of the fortunate gentleman.

"You never saw him," said she; "but he is now here, and you will see him as soon as you can come down stairs; and remember, I depend upon your liking him. You know you were always my chief favourite among all the boarders; and do you know I have taken a strange fancy into my head--Will you be the best man, my dear Mr Wald?"

"With all my heart," said I, "my dear Miss Patterson; but you forget you have not told me the name yet."

"Mackay," she answered—"John Mackay—a very old friend, I assure you; and he has just got the Kirk of St Dees from the College."

"And I never saw Mr Mackay?"

"No, my dear, he has been away good ten years teaching a school in the north: and, to tell you the truth, I had almost begun to think the world was to be against us, and the thing never to be. It is many a day since John and I were first acquainted. But now we shall do very well; for St Dees is a comfortable little place; and I

have laid by no less than thirty pounds, which will be a great help to the manse. I have not bought a new gown these five years but one, and that was mournings for my brother, the lieutenant, —poor Bob!—that died, as you may have heard perhaps, at Ticonderoga."

My spirits were not at the time in a very buoyant state; but, at any rate, I believe I may do myself the justice to say, that I could not have heard all this without feelings of considerable compunction and humiliation. I smothered all up, however, as well as I was able, and consoled myself with good resolutions as to the modesty of my future carriage and imagination.

In a few days I was able to join the family circle, and saw, of course, the happy man. Happy, indeed, I may well say he was; for, in spite of a set of features cast in a most massive and saturnine mould, a dry adust complexion, and a figure of Herculean ponderosity, I believe I never met with such a specimen of glee irrepressible. The good man, evidently not much short of fifty, rose every now and then from his chair, and walked up and down the room, rubbing his hands and smiling

to himself. Occasionally, *apropos de rien*, we were treated with a most sonorous cackle—and the triumphant simper that sat on his lips whenever he addressed or looked to Miss Biddy—the dance in his eyes whenever she happened to smile upon him in return;—all these, and a thousand little symptoms besides, are quite beyond my power of painting.

I was present at the wedding, and had the honour of ungloving the horny hand of this worthy man at the critical moment which sealed his bliss. The fashion of marriage-jaunts, and all such refinements, were not yet come into play among us; so we had a capital hot supper at the Professor's, and they in whose honour the entertainment was given, were neither denied the opportunity of partaking in it, nor compelled to partake of it longer than was consistent with the proprieties of the occasion.

These nuptials were celebrated within a few weeks of the end of the session, and, as yet, I was entirely in the dark as to what was to become of me during the months of the long vacation; for, although I heard every now and then from Mrs

Mather, and sometimes had a few more acceptable lines from little Katharine, not a word had ever yet been dropped as to this matter. In short, the College was within a week of its breaking up ere I was informed by the Professor, that he had heard from Mr Mather, and that it was arranged I should stay all the summer where I was. The other lads went away home; and I was thus left quite alone in the house. And a dull, a very dull house it was; for old Patterson was degenerating rapidly, his excellent housekeeper removed from him, into a sloven; and everything about his establishment partook, of course, of the effects of his indolence and inattention to common affairs. However, I in so far profited by all this. I had spent but an idle winter; and, having now no companions to dissipate with, I set seriously to my books, and made considerable progress in my studies

The next winter found me in possession of habits of greater diligence; and I did not, to any very culpable extent, depart from them. I was, on the whole, a hard reader, and, at the end of my second course, received marks of decided ap-

probation from the teachers under whom I had been placed.

I had lived a life almost solitary, and in general certainly very simple and innocent. The lads there were mostly poor, and had few means of signalizing themselves by any folly. Our greatest diversion in the way of sport was a game at golf; and we had little notion of any debauch beyond a pan of toasted cheese, and a bottle or two of the College ale, now and then on a Saturday night. I, to be sure, had at my first entrée been admitted to some of the parties among the town's people; but, after the departure of my dear patroness, my acquaintance with that sphere of gaiety, such as it was, soon dwindled away to nothing.

I began to feel a strong—a strengthening—an impatient desire to revisit Blackford; but, hearing nothing from thence that looked as if my presence was expected, had set it down as fixed, that I was to pass another solitary summer at the University.

But let me hurry over all this. At the end of the third season, I found myself in precisely the same situation, which I have been describing as

mine towards the end of the second: with this exception, however, that I now began, not merely to fancy, but to feel myself something of a man, and, of course, to contemplate, with great and increasing bile, the state of uncertainty to which my concerns, and prospects of every sort, had every appearance of being abandoned, whether from contemptuous indifference, or from total aversion. A thousand suspicions of dark, settled, deliberate malevolence, began to overcloud my thoughts. Even Katharine—even she, I said to myself, was becoming a stranger to me. How long was this to last? What was to be the end of it?—Why not go at once, however uninvited and unexpected—why not go at once, and get categorical answers to questions, which, in my boyhood, I could scarcely have been expected to think of putting—to what authority, namely, was my duty really bound; and of what patrimony should I look on myself as ultimately master? Upon these things, it was sufficiently evident, the shaping of my future education, the whole complexion of my fortunes and hopes, ought to depend.

It may be, after all, possible that I deceived

myself, when I supposed that these things formed the real objects of my heart-seated anxiety. Certain it is, that the anxiety itself existed: Some uncontrollable yearning drew me; and, if I could not analyze, I at least obeyed it. I determined not to wait for the formalities of the academical dispersion—I determined not to wait until the letter, which I had made up my mind to disobey, had come.

Having packed my trunk, and left a note on my table for Dr Patterson, I let myself out of the house one night after all the family were gone to bed, and had walked near thirty miles ere I thought there was any chance of my evasion being discovered.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAD great strength and activity, and by help of these, and an anxious mind to stimulate them, I got over the ground, so as to sleep the second night within sixteen miles of my journey's end. I over-slept myself, however, and it was near eight o'clock next morning ere I saw the smoke of Blackford over the firs. I was startled just at that moment with hearing a most sonorous voice, exerting itself apparently quite near me in some lofty declamation. I halted for an instant, and recognized my good old Dominie, who was coming towards me through the wood, engaged in his usual morning's walk, to his favourite tune of

"Peliaco quondam prognatæ vertice pinus."

The worthy enthusiast was so deeply occupied

with the book he contrived to hold in his hand, that he was close upon me ere he noticed that any one had crossed his walk; and even then, the sun being in his dim eyes, I believe he would not have recognized his pupil, had I not saluted him with another fragment of the same strain—

"Teque ego sæpe meo, te carmine, compellabo!"—

On hearing which note, the play of his wooden supporters was arrested with such hasty energy, that the spectacles almost danced off his nose; while strenuously shaking me by the hand, he ejaculated in rapid succession, "Guide us a'!—Mr Matthew himself, as I shall answer! *Salve deum genus!*—Welcome, thrice welcome, φιλην ες πατριδα γαιαν."

The fervour of our first greetings having evaporated, I asked my friend after his own household, and inquired, whether all the family were at home at Blackford? The dominie, dropping a pious tear, informed me, that he had some time ago laid his mother in the grave, and that he was now a solitary being in the world. "As to Black-

ford," said he, dashing his sorrow aside, " I suppose you know that the Minister has been in the North for some time. He is not yet returned; but all the rest are at home, and well. I saw Miss Katharine riding past my window yesterday with Mr Lascelyne;—ay, here are his horses, and pretty cattle, indeed, are they;—the like were never seen in the parish until he came among us."

I knew very well that Mr Mather had been governor in the noble family of Lascelyne, and owed his living to that patronage; but, totally unprepared for hearing of such a visitor, I was so rash as to shew my surprise by a broad question,— " Who is this you are speaking of?"

The answer was satisfactory enough. The Honourable George Lascelyne had been domesticated in the house of his ancient preceptor for more than a year past. • • •

Recollecting myself, or endeavouring to do so, I gave my friend to understand, that I had heard the circumstance before, and allowed it to slip out of my memory.

The knowledge, however, that Mr Mather was *not* at Blackford, was, although perhaps I was not conscious of this at the moment to its full extent, far more than sufficient to counterbalance any feelings of reluctance which could arise out of the prospect of meeting with a stranger, even an *honourable* stranger, there; so I parted company from the schoolmaster, and followed *passibus inæquis* the groom of this unknown. The horses were, indeed, beautiful thorough-breds; and their guide, although I had never seen a Newmarket sprig before, had an air so decidedly knowing, that I was satisfied at one glance this must be *the thing*.

My aunt happened to be at her window, and, I believe, both saw and recognized me long ere I was very near the gate. She was there to receive me when I came up; and, I must own, nothing surprised me so much as the little surprise she exhibited upon the occasion. I take it for granted, that, finding herself without appropriate instructions from her lord, she had at once formed the resolution, that he should find *res integras* upon his arrival. Had my name not been Matthew Wald, I should say, my reception by the lady of

Blackford was better, than, under all the circumstances, I ought to have looked for. But, to tell truth, all the time she was speaking to me my thoughts were wandering.

Katharine had heard my voice in the lobby, and she ran out immediately. There was such a flush on her face, and such a sweet confused flash of joy in the first glance I met, that I saw nothing but my own old Kate, and felt all my soul kindle and melt at once as I embraced her. But the moment that was over—the moment my eyes *rested* upon my cousin, I perceived so great a change, that I could not help wondering that had not been the first thing I did see. After gazing at her three seconds, I durst no more have offered to kiss her again, as I had just done, than to fly. From thirteen to sixteen—from a child to a woman—what a leap was here!—And such a creature, John!—I was awed into very dumbness when I contemplated the glorious, the gorgeous flower, into which my dear, quiet, little bud had expanded—the elastic, bounding, loveliness of the formed figure!—the rich luxury of those deep-set eyes—those lips, on which a thousand new meanings vibrated

and hovered—the lofty modesty of mien that sat in the place of blushing bashfulness—the unconscious reserve of conscious beauty—the innocent instinctive majesty of young womanhood!—To think of that moment almost brings boyhood again into my brain and my blood.—But I know, I see your wicked smile, and I would fain take the hint if I could.

In the midst of all this romance, I heard somebody humming some outlandish tune in the parlour; and Mrs Mather said hastily,—"Come, Katharine, my love, we are forgetting Mr Lascelyne.—You will be ready for your breakfast, Matthew?"

I was the last that entered the room, and my aunt immediately honoured me with a formal introduction to a very fine gentleman, who, arrayed in a morning-gown of the most delicate chintz, and morocco slippers, was lounging listlessly over a cup of chocolate and an ethereal wafer of toast, and who acknowledged his new acquaintance with a smile and a bow, both redolent of the most condescending indifference. My spirits were rather

in a flurry, but that occasional wandering of mind neither prevented my doing ample justice to my breakfast, nor remarking, with surprise at first, and afterwards with a very different sort of feeling, the complete ease of familiarity with which our honourable youth treated my cousin. While I had barely courage to say *Katharine*, behold *Kate* was the most respectful address his noble lips vouchsafed; and, what was worse, both the mother and the daughter seemed to be quite delighted with this free-and-easy system. His very way of picking his teeth, had all the quiet loftiness of presumption in it. There was the quintessence of the aristocratic in his hollow laugh. But the same proud security was visible in things that interested me far more than these. In a word, for why should I expatiate on my own humiliations, I could not help two rising suspicions from gnawing my heart within me. The first of them was, that the young lord despised me; and the second, that he loved my cousin.

Katharine happened to go out of the room soon after breakfast, and I slunk up stairs to my own old garret in a mood of considerable sulkiness. I

flung myself down in a chair, and my eyes rested upon an old-fashioned hanging mirror, which, by a great crack through the middle, recalled to my recollection an unfortunate game at Blindman's Buff that took place several years before, when my beautiful cousin was a match for myself in every species of romping. From these old days my attention wandered back to the present, and I began to study, with some feelings not of the most delightful description, the appearance of the image now before me. The triumphs of the Fife friseur had been quiet obliterated during my journey, and a huge mass of raven black hair was hanging about my ears in all the native shagginess of the picturesque. I perceived at one glance, that my whole dress was in the extreme of barbarous bad taste,—that my coat was clumsily cut, and would have taken in two of me,—that my waistcoat, (poor Miss Patterson's wedding-garment,) was an atrocity,—and that my linen was not only coarse but soiled. I had it in my power to remedy this last defect; so I stripped off my clothes, and began to scrub myself by way of preparation. But, clean shirt and all, the thing would

not do. "Fool!" said I to myself, "do you not see how it is? What nonsense for you to dream of figging yourself out; as if anything could make *that* look well! Do you not see, that your complexion is as black as a gipsy's,—your growth stunted,—everything about you as destitute of grace as if you were hewn out of a whinstone? What a pair of shoulders that bull's neck is buried in! The sturdiness of these legs is mere deformity! Shapeless, uncouth, awkward, savage-looking ragamuffin that you are, seeing your own reflection as you do, how could you dream that anything in the form of a woman could ever fancy these grotesque proportions?"

I heard voices under my window at this moment, and, peeping out, saw Mr Lascelyne and my cousin standing together in conversation beside the dial-stone. He had laid aside his robe-de-chambre. and was dressed for riding. A short green frock, and tight buckskin breeches, descending, without a crease, to the middle of the leg, exhibited the perfect symmetry of his tall and graceful person. His profile was purely Greek,—nothing could surpass the bright bloom of his

complexion. But it was the easy, degagee air of the coxcomb,—the faultless grace of every attitude and action, that cut me deepest. I saw it all. —Fain would I have not seen it;—I tried to deceive myself;—but I could not be blind.— I saw Katharine's eye beaming upon him as he chattered to her. I watched his airy glances—I devoured their smiles. He took her gaily by the hand, and they disappeared round the corner of the house.

I sat down again, half naked as I was, in my chair, and spurned the slipper from my foot against the mirror. It hit the line of the old crack; and the spot where it lighted became the centre of a thousand straggling radii, that made it impossible I should be henceforth offended otherwise than with sorely broken fractions of my sweet form.

I went into the wood; and, although I heard myself called on several times, did not think proper to be in any hurry to reappear. After an hour had passed I heard horses' feet near me, and, getting to the hedge, perceived Mr Lascelyne and my cousin riding together down the avenue.

"How strange," said Katharine, "this is of Matthew! I can't understand my cousin to-day. I never doubted he would have rode out with us."

"Poo, poo!" replied the youth, "he has gone to visit some of his old acquaintance, I dare say. We shall see him at dinner.—'Tis a charming day! Shall we go to Bridgend, or up the glen?"

I did not catch the answer; but began half to reproach myself for my behaviour. I wandered, however, across some fields, and found the two ponies, that Kate and I had used to scamper about the hills upon in former days, grazing together in their old paddock, amidst the milch cows. Their coats were shaggy, their manes hung down about their feet, and they set off, neighing and kicking up their heels, whenever I came near them. I called to them, and my own old favourite knew my voice at once. Katharine's little piebald came trotting after him, and they both began rubbing their noses upon me in rather a melancholy fashion. Dogs could scarcely have shewed more sense.

"Aha!" said I, looking at piebald's unshod hoofs, "'tis many a day that your services have

been dispensed with, my woman. You see what it is to be an old friend, Mistress Bess of Kintail. Poor, dwarfish, rough-coated Highlander that you are, do you not perceive that your tail has never been docked, nor even your mane hogg'd? and for you to think of keeping your own against yon fine, tall, sleek, slim ambler, that shews the blood of Araby the Blessed in every fibre, and no more considers you as one of the same race with herself, than my lady's pet greyhound, in her stuffed basket, does the poor colley, that she hears barking on the hill!—Was ever such nonsense?"

I walked away from the pair on this; but the poor devils were so affectionately disposed, that they kept at my heels till I was out of the field, and I saw them stretching their old white noses over the stile after me as long as I was within sight of them.

I walked about the fields till I had pretty well cooled myself, and approached the house when I thought it was near dinner-time, with many resolutions, that, whatever I might feel, I should at least betray nothing to make me ridiculous. I was thrown off myself again, however, by perceiving,

as I past the offices, my old friend the whiskey, evidently fresh from a journey. I concluded, of course, that Mr Mather had returned: nor was I deceived in this, though certainly very much so in regard to the reception which I forthwith fancied for myself. The Minister was sitting in the parlour with his wife, and the first glance told me that he was in excellent humour. He smiled and took my hand with an air of so much cordiality, that I really felt quite ashamed of myself for having so long harboured unpleasant feelings, which my superior in age and experience had apparently quite dismissed. It was evident, too, that Mather had been speaking kindly of me behind my back; for his wife not only talked, but looked far more heartily than she had done when left to herself.

Katharine had come back from her ride some time before this; and she now made her appearance in a different dress, which even improved the charms of the morning. Mr Lascelyne also came down stairs in an evening garb of the most fashionable cut of the day; and even the Minister had not disdained to unpaper his most brilliant pair of buckles. I felt internally that I was the

shabby feature in the assemblage; but, as I had resolved, I swallowed my sensations as well as I could. One thing was too obvious not to be seen; and being seen, how could it fail to please me?—I mean the pleasure that Katharine received from seeing the good-humoured way in which Mr Mather and I were behaving to each other. As we were passing from the drawing to the dining-room, her feeling of this was spoken in a single side-glance, that, I know not how, seemed to soften my whole heart within me. Had we been alone, I could have—I know not what.—Mr Lascelyne, meantime, though a beau of the first water, a coxcomb certainly, was far too highly bred to say or do anything that could offend any one in possession of the slightest reason. In a word, the dinner went off with remarkable ease, and even gaiety. An excellent bottle was produced; and a special toast dedicated to my honour upon my return.—"Give me leave," cried Lascelyne, "to crave another bumper. Mr Wald, (turning to me,) I propose the health of the new Principal."

"Principal! what Principal?" said I, smiling.

I saw Mr Mather drop his eyes, and began to

suspect something of the truth. But, after a little pause, Mr Lascelyne explained the whole.

" You have not heard then your friend's candidateship? You will be happy, sir, to hear that there is almost no doubt of his success—"

" Nay, nay," interrupted the Minister, " you must not just say so neither, Mr George. But, surely, whether the thing be or be not, I and my family shall always know where our warmest gratitude is due.—Come, ladies, you must share this toast—A bumper to my good Lord!"

The whole minutiæ of the affair were now discussed at full length, and I was no longer at a loss to account for some part at least of the unexpected benignity with which I had been looked upon by Mr Mather. I perceived that he was too full of expectation and triumph, to have any leisure for old disgusts. I profited, in other words, by the same happy influences which induce the fortunate gamester to fling his guinea to the drawer, and go home to kiss his wife and fondle his children, instead of breaking heads, china, and the third commandment.—Never bid for a farm, my dear, upon seeing it in sunshine.

Two or three days passed away without anything happening that is worth troubling you with. Rides and walks, in which Mr Mather himself uniformly joined, occupied the mornings; and in the evenings the whole family were together. I was always expecting that somebody or other, either the Minister, or his wife, or Katharine, would say something that might lead to the subjects I had been so desirous of hearing broached, but I expected in vain. The utmost hilarity, the utmost apparent openness and friendship, prevailed; but I began to feel, somehow or other, that those about me had, as well as myself, thoughts enough that they did not choose to express; and nameless nothings suggested, or rather, perhaps I ought to say, confirmed, the suspicion, that I myself, I, was the cause of this reserve.

Nothing struck me as so odd, when, after a little time had gone by, I was meditating on the state of affairs on my pillow, as the fact, that I should have been hours, days, at Blackford, without having past one half hour alone with my cousin. I was well aware that we were no longer the children, the boy and the girl, we had been;

but we were, after all, if there had been nothing more, the only two of our blood; and each of us, surely, was the oldest friend the other had in the world. Surely there must be somewhere a reason for this: Was it in me? or in her?—or in the art and contrivance of those about us? I was sensible, indeed, that on many little occasions my feelings of awkward pride had held me back: nor was I quite without the suspicion that there might have been something repulsive in the whole cast of my bearing. But Katharine was at home—I was, now at least, no more than the visitor. Ay, but the sex—was there nothing due to that?—was not that the apology? But, then, Lascelyne?—why did I see that she was alone with him, though never with me?—Why had I found them sitting together that very morning, nobody else with them, when I went down to breakfast? Why, when we were all riding, did they so often ride side by side?—And why not? If I had chanced to rise a quarter of an hour earlier, might not Mr Lascelyne have found me, not I him, in the parlour with Katharine?—Was it not a horse of his she rode, and what wonder if two animals that had

always been accustomed to be together still continued to prefer being so?

I cast the thing about in my mind until I persuaded myself I had seen it in every possible light; but still some darkness closed the view. I could not convince myself that there was something wrong, but I felt it; and, though I meant to be a dissembler at the time, yet candour must confess, that I strongly suspect I succeeded but poorly as yet in the part of a pococurante.—The juggler that you see casting up his balls so coolly and so easily, sweated through many a jacket, you may depend on it, ere he was master of his trick. And yet it was not long ere I began to be a tolerable master of mine, as you shall hear.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ere a week had gone by, the promotion of Mr Mather was announced as still more probable by letters from the noble patron, to whose influence he had been beholden mainly, if not entirely, for all his chances of success. The news came in the morning, and in the glee of the hour the Minister himself proposed that the day should be devoted to visiting a scene of great natural beauty, which lies about eight miles up the country from Blackford. Mrs Mather was for once to be of our party; and we were to take a basket of provisions with us, and dine in the woods. The day was one of the loveliest that ever May witnessed. The sky was cloudless blue, every pure streamlet murmured in music, the leaves had the brightness of spring upon them amidst all the glow of summer, every bank was yellow with broom,

and the primroses had not faded, although the hawthorns and wild apple-trees were bursting their blossoms above them.

Our way, for two or three of the last miles, lay through the ancient forest, and there being no regular path, I, happening to be rather absent, found myself separated from the party, and was not able to discover exactly in what direction they had passed on. The trees hung their branches so low every here and there, that one was obliged to make continual circuits, and I became quite bewildered among the coppices. At last I saw a long green glade opening far into the wood, and without thinking of looking for the marks of horses' feet, I clapt spurs to my pony, and dashed on at a hand-gallop. Once and again I thought I heard voices calling; but, in several places I had come upon trees evidently quite newly felled, so that I could not be sure of recovering my party by following these indistinct echoes. I therefore judged, that the best thing would be to find my way, no matter how, to the old castle, which I knew they were to be at some time in the course of the day; and, after vain experiments in many dif-

ferent directions, I was at last fortunate enough to meet with a woodman, who gave me an intelligible plan of route. I followed this; and ere long heard the river rushing over the rocks far down below me. Once within sight of the stream, my business was simple. I jogged along the summit of the high rocky bank, until I came to a place where I thought my pony might keep his feet, descended, forded to the other side, on which I knew the ruin was situated, and advanced up the river at a leisurely pace, upon the softest turf, I think, I have ever seen, and beneath the shadow of fine old oaks and beeches.

I had got a little off the river, to avoid some apparently impassable thickets, and was walking my little Highlander quietly along the top of the knoll, when I heard what seemed to be a woman's voice down below. I halted for a moment, heard that sound again, and, advancing a few paces, saw distinctly Katharine Wald and Mr Lascelyne seated together at the root of a tree, fast by the brink of the water. Tall trees were growing all down the bank, but the underwood consisted of bushes and thorns, and I had a perfect view of the

pair, though they were perhaps fifty paces under the spot where I stood. A thousand tumultuous feelings throbbed upon my brain; and yet a mortal coldness shook me as I gazed. Her right hand covered her eyes as she wept, not aloud, but audibly, beside him. He held the left grasped in his fingers on her knee. I saw him kissing the drops off it as they fell. She withdrew that hand also, clasped them both fervently upon her face, and groaned and sobbed again, as if her heart would break. I heard him speaking to her all the while, but not one word of what he said. I caught, however, a glimpse of his cheek, and it was burning red. Katharine rose suddenly from beside him, and walked some paces alone by the margin of the stream. He paused—and followed. I saw him seize her hand and press it to his lips—I saw her struggle for an instant to release it, and then recline her head upon his shoulder—I saw him, yes! I saw him with my eyes,—I saw him encircle her waist with his arm—I saw them glide away together under the trees, lingering upon every footstep, his arm all the while bearing her up. Heavens and earth! I saw all this as distinctly as I

now see this paper before me—and yet, after they had been a few moments beyond my view, I was calm—calm did I say?—I was even cheerful—I felt something buoyant within me. I whistled aloud, and spurred into a canter, bending gaily on my saddle, that I might pass beneath the spreading branches.

I soon saw the old ivied walls of the castle, bounded airily over the sward until I had reached the bridge, gave my pony to the servants, who were lounging about the ruin, and joined Mr and Mrs Mather, who were already seated in one of the windows of what had been the great hall—the luncheon set forth near them in great order upon the grass-grown floor—

"So you have found us out at last, Matthew," said the Minister—"I was afraid you would come after pudding-time."

"Ay, catch me at that trick if you can," cried I, as gay as a lark.

"Well," says he, "I wish these young people would please to come back again; they have been seeking for you this half hour."

"Indeed!" said I; "I am heartily sorry they

should be wasting their time on such a goose-chase—one might wander a week here without being discovered—I was never in such a wilderness. But I believe I must go and see if I can't find them in my turn."

I stepped toward the gateway in this vein, and was fortunate enough to perceive that they had already reached the place where the servants and horses were. Katharine had pulled her bonnet low down over her eyes; but she smiled very sweetly, (though I could not but think a little confusedly,) as I told her we were waiting for her, and apologized for the trouble I had been giving. To Mr Lascelyne, also, I spoke with a freedom, a mirth, a gaiety, that were quite delightful. In a word, I was the soul of the luncheon party: It was I who drew the corks and carved the pie: It was I who plunged down the precipice to fill the bottles with water: It was I who brimmed the glasses for every one, and who drained, in my own proper person, twice as many bumpers as fell to the share of any two besides. I rattled away with a glee and a liveliness that nothing could check or resist. At first, they seemed to be a little surprised with the change

in my manners, especially Lascelyne; but I soon made them all laugh as heartily as myself. Even Katharine, the fair weeper of the wood, even she laughed; but I watched her eyes, and met them once or twice, and saw that there was gloom behind the vapour of radiance.

I supported this happy humour with much success during great part of the ride homewards, but purposely fell behind again for a mile or two ere we reached Blackford. Upon entering the house I immediately inquired for Mr Mather, and was told he had just stepped into the garden. I followed, and found him walking by himself among the flowers.

"I have been wishing, sir," said I, "to have a little private conversation with you. Are you at leisure at present?"

"Certainly—most certainly," was his answer; and I did not wait for more.

"Well, then, Mr Mather," I began, "although you have had too much delicacy to say anything about it, I know very well that you must have been surprised with my coming away from St Andrews in this unexpected way. But hear what

I have got to say, and I am sure you will see I could not well have done otherwise."

"Nay, nay," he interrupted me, "you are taking the thing quite seriously now."

"Why, yes," I said, "I must own frankly that I do.—But without farther preface, Mr Mather, you know as well as myself how old I am—and I really begin to think, it is high time I should be considering what profession I am to choose."

"Nothing can be more proper.—Quite natural —quite as it should be."

"Well, now, Mr Mather, to come to the point at once, I wish to be informed exactly what is the amount of my patrimony. I know 'tis very inconsiderable, but still something may depend upon a trifling difference in such a case."

"Very considerate, indeed, this is of you, my young friend; but I am sure you will not dream, that your friends are not very willing to assist you in anything that is for your advantage, if you happen to need their assistance. But as to your own money, that question is the first, and 'tis easily answered. Your fortune is at present within a trifle of a thousand pounds."

"Quite enough," said I, gaily—"quite enough for my ideas, I assure you."

"Quite enough, certainly," responded Mather, "to enable you to give yourself the best education the country can afford, and to place yourself handsomely in any honourable profession you may happen to prefer.—Have you, as yet, formed a predilection, may I ask, for any particular line of life?"

"Why, no," said I. "I must honestly confess that my mind is still very undetermined as to these matters; and, to tell you the truth, I think there can be no harm in my seeing a little more of the world ere I do finally fix my profession. I suppose there would be no harm in my going abroad for a year or so, and looking about me?"

"Oh, none, certainly none," he answered;—"none in the world. You can afford it, and why not?—Every young man is much improved by a little travelling. Mr Lascelyne has been three years on the Continent, and he can give you every information about routes, and other particulars.—But would you like the notion of going quite alone?"

"Alone, most certainly," said I. "I can't afford to take a tutor with me; and, as for friends and companions, no fear but I shall find them anywhere.—I think, if you don't disapprove of it, of going to Leyden, to begin with. I know several young men who have gone from St Andrews thither, and they all like it extremely."

"An excellent idea,—a most sensible idea," quoth the Minister. "Leyden is an admirably conducted university. Whether you turn your thoughts to the law, or physic, or——But I dare say you have no thoughts of the church?"—

I smiled a negative.

"Ay—In short, whatever line you fix upon, you will find the best preparation in the world there. There's the famous Doctor Vantomius—a perfect host in himself—ay, and Zuillius, and the great Wolfius, and Van Bore, too. In short, there's a perfect constellation of them. And then 'tis a sound Protestant university—excellent Calvinist divines.—And when should you think of going?"

"Instantly," said I; "why lose time?—Instantly—immediately—to-morrow morning."

"Well, to be sure," said he,—I saw his eyes sparkling,—"to be sure, as you observe, why lose time? Your baggage is at St Andrews; you can easily send for it to Edinburgh;—and there are smacks to Rotterdam every week, I believe.—But dear me, Mr Matthew, what a short visit this will be! Your aunt and Katharine will, I am sure, be sadly mortified.—But then, as you observe, time is precious. This is fine weather for your voyage, too,—couldn't be better weather if you waited a twelvemonth."

The Minister took my arm in a most friendly and confidential style as we walked together round the garden, and so to the house. I purposely allowed him to go in before me; and did not make my appearance until the bell told me that the family, servants and all, were assembled for prayers. I then stepped into the parlour, and took my seat within one of the windows, still preserving, at least I think I did so, the most perfect appearance of composure.

I could not prevent myself, however, from observing, that Katharine, who happened to sit opposite to me, although she never lifted her eyes

from her psalm-book, did not once open her mouth to sing. Her clear notes were all silent. I saw her lips white, and pressed together; I saw them quiver once or twice in spite of all her efforts.—When we rose from our knees, she went out of the room with the servants; and, a few minutes afterwards, her mother, who had followed her, came back and told us Katharine found herself a good deal fatigued with her ride, had a headache, and was gone to bed. I said nothing, but kept my eyes on Mr Lascelyne. I saw him bite his lip, and turn round to take up a book.

My plans, however, were discussed at some length during supper; and Lascelyne talked away very easily about packets, posts, bills of exchange, Amsterdam, Paris, "the Pyrenean, and the river Po." I was the last to go up stairs; and, although I trod as quickly as I could past my cousin's door, I could not shut my ears. There was profound silence in the house, and I heard one or two deep, choking sobs—some space between them. I paused for a moment, and sprung up to my old garret. I had strained the string to its ut-

termost stretch. My heart was full, and it would have broken had I not yielded. I flung myself half undressed upon my bed, and wept like a child. And why not?—I was a boy, a mere boy.

Never having once closed my eyes the whole night, I found when I rose, (about five o'clock,) that they were shockingly red and swollen; and the more I bathed them in my basin, the worse I thought did they look.—"Nay, nay," I said to my proud self, "this will never do. This part of the thing, at least, shall not be seen."

I put on my clothes and crept down stairs as quietly as was possible, and found my way into the sitting-room, that I might write a note to Mr Mather. I wrote two or three, and tore them all into bits.—"It will do just as well," I said, "to write from the village—or the first town I stop at better still. I can say I walked out, and, finding the morning fine, was tempted to go on. I can say I hated the thoughts of taking leave—that, at least, will be true enough."

I had opened one of the window-shutters, and I now thought it would be as well to close it again.

As I was walking on tiptoe across the room, my eye fell on two little black profiles of Katharine and myself, that we had sat for to an itinerant limner when we were children, and which had ever since hung over the chimney-piece. I took Katharine's off the nail, and held it for a minute or two in my hand; but the folly of the thing flashed upon me in a moment, and I replaced it. Her work-table was by the window, and I was so idle as to open the drawer of it. A blue sash was the first thing I saw, and I stuffed it like a thief into my bosom. I then barred the window again, and hurried out of the house by the back way.

It was a beautiful, calm, grey morning—not a sound but the birds about the trees. I walked once, just once, round the garden, which lay close to the house—sat down for a moment in the arbour where my father died—and then moved rapidly away from Blackford.

I could never describe the feelings with which I took my parting look of it from the bridge. The pride, the scorn, the burning scorn, that boiled above,—the cold, curdling anguish below,—the bruised, trampled heart——

I plucked the blue ribbon from my breast, kissed it once as I coiled it up, and flung it into the water below me. It fell into one of the pools among the rocks, where we had used to sail our boats. I watched it till it had got under the bridge, and moved on.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER staying for some days at St Andrews, I proceeded to pay a few visits I had long before promised to certain of my fellow-students who resided in the neighbouring district of Fife, and reached Edinburgh about the end of the month. One of the first things I did here was to go in quest of a gentleman, from whom, Mr Mather had informed me by letter, I should receive money for my voyage and immediate expenses abroad. This person received me with great politeness, and surprised me not a little by intimating that Mr Mather (acting for his wife, my guardian) had lodged the whole of my fortune in the hands of one of the bankers of the city, and that, upon signing some necessary papers, I might, if I pleased, assume forthwith the entire and uncontrolled command of the money. This procedure struck me as not a little

strange certainly; but, after a moment's consideration, I felt extremely pleased with it. 'I am completely thrown off,' said I;—well, thank God I am not to go pennyless into the wide world—this is some comfort. In a word, I signed the releases next day, and walked to the bank with an order for the money in my pocket. My first intention had been to draw out a hundred guineas, and carry them with me to Holland; but, when the cashier had counted fifty pieces, the heap appeared so prodigious, that I was content to leave the rest of my wealth where it was.

Under whatever circumstances, a sum of money, whether in hard cash, as in this instance, or in any less substantial shape, can no more be put into a man's pocket without to a certain extent elevating his spirits, than a bumper of champaigne can be poured down his throat. So, at least, I have commonly found the case to be; and this particular occasion formed no exception to the rule. I walked down to Leith to inquire about the Rotterdam smacks, at a much more swinging, and, at the same time, more leisurely pace, than I should have been able to set forth had my purse contained only enough to pay for a smack ticket. I had been di-

rected to call at a tavern near the pier, where, to this hour, I believe, the skippers most do congregate; and where I had now the satisfaction to be informed, by one of the most mercurial of Dutchmen, that a vessel had sailed for his Vaterland the same morning, and would be followed by another in exactly fourteen days.

Not a little annoyed with this disappointment, I was retracing my steps to the White Horse in the Canongate, when whom should I meet, strutting, like a beau of at least the second order, down Leith Walk, but my old chum, Jack Todd—a good-natured, well-behaved lad, as ever wore the red gown of Him of the Saltire. He had doffed the sorely-washed corduroy breeches; and the Sanquhar hose no longer aspired to be mistaken at a distance for silk:—in fact, Jack was dressed so splendidly that I should, I believe, have passed him, had he not recognised me. Our greetings were of the heartiest; and ere we had been together ten minutes, I had not only learned the whole history of his being established in Edinburgh as apprentice to his brother, a solicitor of some distinction, but in return communicated to Jack the object of my own journey, and

the disappointment which I had just been encountering. He shewed so warm a feeling for my interests, that I gave him also, as we went, a candid account of the situation in which my general prospects and pecuniary concerns were now placed. Upon hearing of the thousand pounds, my friend said, I was a fortunate fellow; that few young men entered life with such noble appliances; and that it was my own fault if I did not meet with every success in whatever profession I might choose to follow. "There's my brother Nathaniel," said he; "what think ye of him? He had but a hundred pounds to begin with, and now, after being some twelve or fifteen years in Edinburgh, he is universally considered as one of the most rising men we have; yet how often have I heard him say, that he would have been at the head of his profession years and years ago, had he happened to have but a few hundreds more at his command when he started! —Upon my word, I wonder you should think of wasting time in Holland—what can Leyden teach better than St Andrews or Edinburgh?—what signifies bothering one's self with all their Dutch gibberish?—why don't you stay where you are, Matthew? Here you will have friends and ac-

quaintance in plenty, there you would be a stranger to the end of time. Hang Holland!" He concluded with pressing me to go and dine with him at his brother's; and to this last part of the strain I had no great difficulty in assenting.

I was conducted up six or seven pairs of stairs into a very neat little dwelling, where everything spoke thriving business, wealth, comfort, and good taste. Jack left me for a moment among three or four sharp-eyed clerks, who were driving their pens in a room surrounded with green boxes, and piles of papers, and soon after introduced me to the master of the house, who, seated in an elbow-chair in the corner of an inner apartment, was dictating, *ore rotundo*, to my friend's brother-apprentice, perched upon a three-legged stool at a high desk over against him. Jack had, no doubt, given me his best word ere I made my appearance; for Mr Todd received me in the most friendly and affable manner. Immersed as he evidently was in business, it was surprising to me to see such a fine, open, good-humoured, rosy, hearty physiognomy. I had no notion of such a lawyer as being *in rerum natura*,—least of all of such a writer.

And then he had so much the air of a man of condition—such grand-looking black satin breeches, such splendid lace down to his knuckles, such brilliant buckles. It was truly surprising to see one of this profession, so unlike in all things the satirical pictures I had been made familiar with—so completely different from your dry, yellow, skin-and-bone, peering, wrinkled pettifogger of the play-books. This was odd enough; but how much more delightful than strange to find, that such a being might not only exist in such a walk of life, but prosper so nobly in it! The circumstance was enough to knock fifty old prejudices to shatters.

This happened to be a half-holiday, so that the clerks were dismissed early, and I sat down to a small but exquisitely neat repast, in company with only the two brothers, and a single friend besides, who, as I found in the sequel, was a country client of my worthy host—a proud-looking, tall, stately, meagre laird from Aberdeenshire. Mr Todd sent round the bottle in a joyous manner, observing, that after several days' hard work, he considered himself entitled to devote one evening to friendship. "And, indeed, Multureclaws," said he, addressing

the Laird, "what should carry us poor devils that live by the sweat of the brow through life at all, if it were not for these occasional relaxations? I like my work, sir; I owe everything to my profession, and I like it; but, hang it! I would fain be a gentleman one night in the week, if I could."

"If you could!" cries the Laird—"come, come, Todd, don't quiz a Buchan body—I'm ower far north for you now, my friend."

"Well, well," says the honest scribe, pushing the bottle on its course,—"I shall say nothing. —Hang it! you're so sharp in your country, that a plain man gets nothing but a laugh for his pains when he speaks a bit of his mind smack out before one of you.—Come, come now, Multurelaws, do you really take me for a born fool? Haven't I sight in my eyes, sir, and touch in my fingers?"

"Ah! the big diel doubts you," quoth Aberdeen.

"There now," continued our host—"there now, Mr Wald, just take notice what a sneer the Laird speaks with. Why, he can't open his mouth without letting out some jibe that's enough to dumfounder one, if one did not know, that is to

say, that he means no harm.—Here, put round the bottle !—hang it ! there's nobody likes to be made a fool of—fill your glasses, I say, every one of you.— Ah, Mr Matthew," he proceeded, after his bumper had descended *guttatim*—" You see what it is to be diligent. Industry is much in this world. Industry enables me to give you as good a bottle of wine, though I say it, as is to be found in all the Parliament Close : but if industry and attention have done so much, not forgetting the kindness of worthy friends, (here he bowed to the Laird,) for the like of me, what should not you look forward to ? Ah, sir ! you don't know, you are not old enough yet to know, the advantages you come into life with. I, sir, everybody knows it,—and why should I be ashamed to say it ?—I, Mr Wald, am a mere *terræ filius*, as the saying is.—I am nobody, sirs ; Jack there and I can't tell who our grandfather was. But you, Mr Wald, you have a pedigree, I am told, like a lord's—A grand descent, a clear line, Multurelaws, about as noble a one as your own.—"This is a thing which industry can *not* purchase. No, no, gentlemen, I am sensible of my own place.

I feel my place—I know where I am. God bless me, if I had had a few ounces of some of your blood in my veins, what a man would I not have been by this time of day! Nothing can make us amends for the want of this. The heralds give us coats of arms, no doubt,—'faith, I believe we may get supporters, if we will stretch our strings far enough; but what signifies talking?—No, no, hang it! the King himself can't change the blood."

During this effusion, the Laird of Multurelaws changed his position more than once in his chair, and his countenance also varied its expression from the quizzical to the lofty, and almost, but not quite, back again. "Foul fa' me," was his response; "now, foul fa' me, Todd, but you're in the wrong—clean in the wrong, to speak so before a young lad like Mr Wald. 'Tis manners makes the man, sir, take my word for that"

"I can't agree with you, Multurelaws," said the writer, casting up his mild eyes—"'Tis the man that makes the manners: What signifies talking—we never can catch the true tone, sir; we have our own things, and they are some of them very good things, and thankful should we be—

but we can never come *that*, sir; we can never reach the style of the old *Terrarum Domini*."

Mr Corncraik retired tolerably tipsy about nine o'clock, being engaged to sup at that hour with his Lady-Lieutenant. Mr Nathaniel, Jack, and I, then closed round a little round table. A free and confidential conversation took place; and I, soothed by the kindness of the man and the manners, and elevated by the blood of the Medoc, told more, and hinted a great deal more, of my private history—than, five hours earlier in the day, I could have supposed it possible I should ever do to any human being.

The sympathy my communications were met with was not more remarkable than the acuteness with which their tenor was eked out by my elder auditor. I found ere long that I had revealed almost everything; but then I felt that it was to a friend indeed I had revealed it.—A servant was sent to the Canongate for my portmanteau—I retired to the same room with my old chum—and found myself once more domesticated beneath a roof of genuine hospitality.

CHAPTER X.

I DID not see my kind host until towards dinner-time next day—and then, as it happened, Jack was obliged, in consequence of some business out of town, to be absent from his brother's board. I had spent the morning in viewing the rarities of the place; in the evening Mr Todd took me with him to the theatre;—and we adjourned from thence to one of those obscure resorts which were then fashionable under the name and title of oyster-cellars. Here my friend, supper being over, and a small bowl scientifically mixed, filled the glasses to the brim, and began as follows.—"You will scarcely guess, my dear fellow, what has been this morning's work with me, or at least a part of it."

"No, truly, Mr Todd—how should I?"

"No matter—but you shall hear, my fine fel-

low, you shall hear. Well, then," he continued, after a slight pause, "you must know I have been at the Register Office, and 'faith I have been examining the title-deeds of the Blackford property a little.—Fill your glass, my dear Wald, for I believe I have news that will astonish you."

"Why, nothing about those matters can very much interest me, I think," was my reply.

"Softly, softly," whispered he, with a gentle smile of superiority—"what would you say if your father's will was nothing but waste paper?"

"I should say nothing about it," I replied; "'tis *his* will, and that's enough."

"Fine feeling there, my young friend, fine feeling indeed—but listen to me, notwithstanding. When you have lived as long in the world as I have done, you will know that a man is seldom the best judge in his own concerns: and in the meantime, I am sure you will pardon my taking the freedom of looking a little into yours for you.—You love your cousin, Wald?"

I blushed, half conscious, half irate.

He paused for an instant, and went on—"And she loves you—"

I smiled my scorn.

"She *loved* you, certainly."

"Nonsense.—We were children."

"She is much under the influence of her mother, and her mother's husband?"

"No doubt."

"Mather owes all his promotions to the Lascelyne family?"

I nodded assent.

"He is about to repay them with Miss Wald's hand, and this old estate?"

I nodded again.

"Was this sort of thing contemplated by your father when he made his will?——

"Come, come," cried he, throwing himself back in his chair; "we must not suffer all this. I tell you now, my dear fellow, the case is a clear one. Your father's will was executed only three weeks before his death. I believe it will be easy to prove that he was ill before it was signed, and extremely difficult to prove that he was either at kirk or market after. The deed is not worth twopence; the estate is yours. Your cousin is worked upon; duped, made a tool of, a bauble, a coin, by this sanc-

tified scoundrel; we must look to this affair sharply; we must get the estate into the right hands. We shall then see both the Mathers and the Lascelynes in their true colours—and what's more, Miss Wald will see them too. In a word, the poor young lady is not getting fair play; and can never get it, unless through you——"

"Taking her land from her would be fair play?"

"*Her* land! that's begging the question, my dear Wald. 'Tis *your* land, I say—and so will the Court say too.—Come, come, you must pluck up heart—take back the land—and then you may marry your cousin, if it so pleases you both; (you will at least hear of no Lascelyne for a rival;) or if it so pleases yourself, you may *give* her the land, and leave her to do with it and herself as she likes. This, even this, would be pleasant—I speak for myself.—I make no pretence to be above that sort of thing—the power of giving such a termination to the affair would gratify *my* feelings."

Let me not linger thus upon my shame. May you, my boy, never know what it is to hold buried at the root of a heart naturally both honest and

proud, the biting, gnawing recollection of *one* act of meanness. I sinned against every right feeling of my nature. The thirst of revenge—the dream, the abominable dream, of a guilty, haughty, insolent triumph, was too much for me. I allowed myself to be flattered, puzzled, argued out of myself. Years have not softened the darkness of that inexpiable stain. Others long ago forgave me; myself I never shall forgive. I have sometimes forgotten those things;—but never, never since I began to go down the hill of life. Age has the memory of other feelings, both good and bad; but one leaves no shadow; it stays itself. Indulge a thousand evil passions, and you may wash out their traces with tears—but yield once, ay once, to a base one, and you will find it not only difficult to weep, but vain.

With a thousand paltry little pretences I half—for it was never more than this—I half-deceived myself at the time. I believe I did really persuade myself, just at the beginning, that I was attacking Mr Mather, not my cousin. But as to the means of my attack—the questioning the will of my father—as to this I certainly never did succeed

in blinding myself. The pitiful unction I laid to the wound, which the sense of guilt that I always did retain as to this part of the affair created and kept open,—my pitiful unction was nothing but that I should always, under whatever circumstances, have the power of undoing what I might do. I persuaded myself, therefore, that I was *only* seeking to gratify my vanity—and this, forsooth, this miserable *only* was my consolation.

But once more, allow me to hasten over what tortures myself, and cannot but distress you. I gave in to Mr Todd's devices. I abandoned my scheme of going to Leyden, and placed my little fortune at his disposal. At my petition, he was appointed my tutor *ad litem* by the Court of Session; and I was a plaything in his hands—and a trick of the High Street.

Several months elapsed ere the business was brought to a conclusion. Long ere then, convinced, no doubt, how it was to terminate,—or willing, it may possibly have been, to run a small risk for the sake of such a fine appearance of disinterestedness—the heir of the Lascelynes was married to Katharine Wald. I was humbled sorely by this news; but I had a plentiful harvest of that kind to ga-

ther. I secretly wrote to my cousin, declaring my intention to give up my suit. My letter was returned in a blank cover—and I persisted in it. For some time things bore a favourable appearance. It was proved distinctly that my father had not lived more than three weeks after signing his deed. It was very nearly proved that he had been ill during the whole of these weeks. But at last the decisive day came ; and it was proved that all these facts were of no sort of consequence, because he had, the very day before his death, walked unsupported across Blackford Bridge—and that the common immediately beyond that bridge was, by some ancient charter, a legal market-place. The will, therefore, was sustained unanimously.

I was present when the cause was determined. From a corner of the little dark gallery, I saw, myself unseen or unnoticed, the fifteen old men in purple and fine linen crowded round their table. I saw Mr Mather's finely powdered wig among the counsel at the bar. I heard the presiding Judge conclude his speech with expressing the opinion of the Court, that, under all the circumstances of the case, no blame—none whatever—no blame in the world, could be laid to the door of the pursuer in

this action: that things had borne a very dubious aspect: that the facts on which the decision ultimately followed were of such a nature, that it was almost impossible their existence should have been suspected in certain quarters: that, on the whole, the Court approved of everything that had been done—"assoilzie the defender, grant full costs, and *decern*."—You may imagine the feelings with which I walked home after this scene.

Mr Todd gave me to understand in the course of the evening, that the expenses of this action—what with proofs, witnesses, fees, &c.—amounted in all to L.500: but this was a trifling item in the account which I had to sum up for myself. I knew that, between this and the money I had been expending on my own foolish, and sometimes highly reprehensible pleasures during my residence in Edinburgh, I was all but a beggar. But I believe it would have added little to my burden had I been told distinctly that I was not almost, but altogether one. Around me everything was dark enough; but what was this to the night, the stormy night, within!

I was still labouring with the first fever of shame and remorse, when Mr Todd came into my room

and put into my hands two letters. The one of them was addressed to himself—and here it is.

Holyroodhouse, 17*th*.

"Sir,

"On reaching town this evening, I have been informed of the decision in the case in which you have acted as Mr Matthew Wald's agent. Some time ago, that gentleman addressed a letter to Mrs Lascelyne, to which, under existing circumstances, I did not judge it proper any answer should be returned. But now—I beg you will impress upon Mr Wald's mind, that, if I write to you, rather than to himself, at present, I do so entirely from the fear of intruding myself in a manner unpleasant to his feelings.

"Mrs Lascelyne and myself, then, wish Mr Wald to be informed, in whatever way you may conceive most proper, that our agent has been instructed to defray the whole costs of the late suit. You will, therefore, have the kindness to hand your account to Mr Whyte.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

"G. Lascelyne Wald.

"*Mr N. Todd, &c. &c. &c.*"

The instant I had read this production, I told Mr Nathaniel Todd, that I trusted he would permit me to answer for myself a communication which concerned myself only. He saw the scowl on my face, no doubt, and perceived both what my intention was, and the vanity of attempting to controvert it. He must have known something of my temper by this time. He nodded gravely, said I must take my own way, and withdrew. I folded up the insult, wrote within the cover, "with Mr Matthew Wald's compliments," addressed the packet to Mr Lascelyne, and, without a moment's delay, sent it down to Holyrood.

I believe more than half an hour had passed ere I remembered that there had been two letters. The second had been tossed on the ground: I now picked it up, and saw, judge with what feelings, the hand-writing of my cousin. I read these words:—

"I write under the greatest embarrassment, and without the knowledge of any one. My heart bleeds to think that I must take this way. But I cannot bring myself to think of sleeping before I have said in some way, that I hope to God *we* are not

to be strangers. I cannot believe that there has ever been enmity, or anything that anybody could say was enmity, between us. God bless you, dear Matthew, and prosper you.

" K. L. W.

" *Holyrood, eleven o'clock, Saturday night.*"

The moment I had perused this little note, I determined that, come what might, I would see my cousin. I resolved to spare myself nothing —to make her hear from my own lips the whole agony of my remorseful spirit. There was a certain repose in my mind as I contemplated the scene of this extreme humiliation: I felt as if its pain would ease me of half my burthen. I quitted my room immediately, and walked down the hill to the Palace. The open space in front of it was, as usual, deserted; but a few blackguard-looking boys were lingering about the gate. The porter was scolding them away when I came near them; and it was not easy for me to get him to attend to my questions.

At last he did condescend to hear what I had

to say. He informed me, in return, that the lady I was inquiring for had set off five minutes before with her husband, for their seat in the north; and that the urchins he had been dispersing had congregated themselves to witness the departure of the carriages.—I leave you to imagine for yourself the worn-out weary languor with which I retraced my steps up the Canongate.

Confused and aimless as my miserable condition of mind was, one thing was plain enough—that I could not remain in Edinburgh. As to this I never permitted myself to hesitate; but whither to go, and what to do, these were questions of a very different description.

I had slowly ascended that strange old street about half its length, when Mr Todd's senior clerk met me full in the face, apparently almost breathless with running. "O! Mr Wald," said he, turning, and plucking me along with him, "where, in all the world, have you been?—The magistrates are waiting for you—all the jurymen but yourself have been there this half hour."

I had totally forgotten the affair, but now comprehended the whole of it. The Aberdeenshire

gentleman (whom I met with on my first arrival in this city) had been, under Todd's auspices, labouring to prove himself entitled to a dormant baronetcy: this was the great, the decisive day, big with the fate of the orange-tawney ribbon, and I had been engaged to make one of the jury, (a packed one of his own and his agent's friends, of course,) who were to vote the Laird into his honours, and dine with him afterwards—or vote his claims untenable, and dine at their own proper expenses. You may easily suppose that I would have given a good deal to be rid of such a scrape at this moment; but the hall where the assemblage were sitting was hard by, and I knew not how to escape from the duty which I had several weeks before promised to perform. Besides, I reflected, or at least I might have done so, that I could do nothing as to my own matters, until I had held some conversation with Mr Todd;—which of course was out of the question for this evening. At all events, I submitted, and was soon seated among the rest, by a table covered with papers and parchments, at the nether extremity of which Todd stood with the blazoned pedi-

gree of the representative of all the Corncraiks in his hand; while, on a bench somewhat elevated over against the other end of it, a cheesemonger in a gold chain was nodding over the Evening Courant of yesterday, and one or two death-warrants for the morrow.

I played my part in this hackneyed farce with the same silence and submission as the rest of the assize. We heard old papers and documents muttered and stuttered for the best part of an hour, ratified by an unanimous nod of assent the verdict which had been written out before we came thither, and Corncraik of Multurclaws became, by our potent decree, as good a baronet as many who figure on the same venerable roll. The new-made Sir Daniel's new-painted coach was already at the door to convey us to the tavern, and his dinner was awaiting our respects; and I thus found myself constrained to look forward to an evening of the utmost misery, spent in a company where joviality, hilarity, and exultation, were to be the ruling powers.

I was packed into the machine with three or four of my seniors; and I certainly do not remem-

ber to have met with a merrier coach-full, even at a funeral. The party at the tavern was what I had expected—even boisterous in glee. Toasts, speeches, and songs, kept the table in a roar, and the bottle was a *perpetuum mobile.* I tried to laugh, I even tried to listen; but I did drink. I poured down bumper after bumper; but it was in vain: The wine had no more effect upon me than so much spring-water. I have heard it said that it is absolutely impossible to make a man drunk the night before he is to be hanged—whether that be or be not so, I know from experience, that there are many situations in which wine at least has no power—not one jot—either to elevate my spirits, or to perplex my perceptions: and I confess I have no difficulty in believing that Clarence may have died as sober as a judge.

There was some noise in the street, and I happened to rise from my seat to look what the occasion might be. How clear is the image of that moment before me now!—The sun had apparently been below the horizon for an hour or two—the rich warm twilight—the swarming High Street—(it was more like a square than a street in those

days)—the groups of gentlemen walking backwards and forwards—the ladies in their chairs, with footmen, and some of them flambeaux—the whole effect gay, though not glittering, full of an endless variety of colour and shadow—a softened scene of sprightliness, grace, and beauty. Some strolling Savoyards, with brown shining faces full of mirth, were exhibiting their wares to a crowd of girls under our window, and this had occasioned the noise that drew me from the table, or, rather, that gave me a pretence for quitting it for a moment. I looked down upon this airy picture, and heard the jolly lads behind me commencing in full chorus,

> "We abandon all ale,
> And beer that is stale,
> Rosa solis, and damnable hum;
> But we will rack
> In the praise of sack,
> Against *omne quod exit in um*," &c.

I looked and I heard, John—and I really could stand the thing no longer. I stole out without being noticed, and was soon quiet enough, and dark enough too, in the little back-room which I had so long occupied in Mr Todd's house, and of

which I felt thoroughly convinced that I should be the tenant but for one night more.

I sat for some time in the darkening room; and then, I cannot very well tell why, went to get my candle lighted. I perceived that I might do this in the writing-chamber, and opened the door. One of the clerks was busy writing; and, in lighting my candle at his, I could not help noticing my own name on the paper before him. I asked him what he was doing; and the young man answered me, in some confusion, that he was only making out some accounts for his master.

"My accounts, I believe," said I—"I think my name is there—let me see the paper."

He hesitated a moment, mumbled something about "Mr Todd's orders," and "to-morrow;" but I cut him short, begged he would lay aside his scruples, if they arose from any notion of giving me annoyance; and, in a word, half-forced out of his hand several large and comely sheets, which were already stitched together with pink ribbon in the most business-like fashion, and which bore for superscription these words, engrossed in letters of majestic stature, and enveloped amidst a maze of

the most captivating flourishes, "*Account of Charge and Discharge between Matthew Wald, Esquire, and Nathaniel Todd, C. S.*

For the principal item in this bill I was already prepared, as you are aware. But I confess that I expect you will be scarcely less astonished with hearing, than I was at the moment with seeing, "To board and lodging during twelvemonths, L.100 !" I glanced my eye hastily over the columns, gave the paper back again to the clerk, who was pretending to mend his pen, and withdrew forthwith to my chamber.

I sat down in a storm of wrath and indignation, hating at length equally the world and myself. My own rash, fierce, and vindictive passions had deprived me of my self-respect: but, even in this situation, it was an additional blow to know for certain, instead of only obscurely suspecting, that I had been the plaything, the sport, the bubble of every one in whom I had placed any sort of dependence. This low fawning knave, too, had all the while been laughing at me in his sleeve: this miserable, even he, was about to strip off the last fragment of his mask, and laugh in my face.

This caitiff, whom I had just left drinking and singing among his boon companions, had coolly, before he repaired to his tavern, given orders for preparing this document: Without doubt, he would put it into my hands in the morning, and turn me out of his house—pennyless—a beggar. And what prospect before me?—Despised even by myself, where could I shew my face? Proud, yes, in spite of all I had done, proud—idle—without means—without character—a disgrace to my name, and a burthen to myself, what should I do—what should I look for?—what remained?

A certain dark thought had risen in my breast more than once within the last ten days, and I had crushed the suggestion. It now recurred, and I made no effort to banish the fiend that was tempting me. I went deliberately towards a little closet in the corner of the room where my clothes, &c. were kept. I put my hand into my trunk—it was a great old sea-chest of my father's—and tumbled over the contents, until I found what I wanted—his broadsword. I grasped the end of the scabbard, and in lifting it from the trunk, there dropt out of the basket-handle a certain little red psalm-

book, of which I think I once before made some mention.

I was in the act of picking up the book, (though *why* I thought of doing so at all I cannot well say,) when I heard a knock at my chamber-door. I had locked it, and when I opened it, there was Mr Todd, in a sleepy, half idiotical condition of drunkenness, wanting a light. I went and got a candle for him, saw him stagger towards his room, and once more bolted my door. But that minute—that moment, had been sufficient. That sleek, fat-faced, unfeeling brute—should I really suffer myself to be hastened out of the world for anything that he could or could not do?—Could I really have been the fool to forget that he would be the first to treat such a proceeding as a piece of the merest imbecility? And, laying him altogether out of view, what right had I to die in a grand Roman fashion, forsooth, and by that sword, too, that had never yet been stained with one drop of dishonoured or dishonourable blood? "No, no," I said to myself, "let me at least bear what I have bound on: Heroes may perhaps be entitled to seek another sphere: surely this is as high a one as I have any

right to? No, no, let me bend, stoop, work, sweat —let me cease at least to think of *pride*."

At that moment, at least, I was a stranger to it: I was humble enough, whatever else I might be. I laid my father's sword again into its place, and then opened the little psalm-book, and read some lines in it. Old thoughts began to come back almost in their old shapes; and I could scarcely help rubbing my eyes, to see whether I had not been dreaming some long black dream. However, I was very low and humble; and if I would fain have been softened and melted too, I see neither the wonder nor the harm of it.

In one way or another, I certainly composed my spirits into a very tolerable degree of quietness. I slept several hours, and rose calm and collected, though full of wild enough schemes.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr Todd had gone out ere I left my room; but I took care to see him in the course of the morning, and had a conclusive conversation. I could not bring myself to argue, far less to reproach. I dryly did just what was necessary for the final closing of all our accounts; and was about to have quitted his house immediately with L.100—the whole remains of my fortune—in my pocket, when he was pleased, entirely of his own accord, to hint, that he had formed a plan for my future disposal of myself, if I would do him the favour to listen to it. I bowed coldly, and heard him usher in, with many fine flourishes, the proposal, that I should devote myself to the legal profession, and, with that view, bind myself forthwith apprentice to himself. The entrance-fees, he observed, would no doubt swallow up most of my

ready money, but I could easily support myself ever afterwards by the fair profits of my pen. I need scarcely say that I scorned this notion utterly; I had seen quite enough of him, and something of the law too. I therefore answered very gravely, that my inclinations lay in another direction, and was bowed out of the house with great civility. I am not sure, up to this hour, that Jack Todd had ever ceased to be my friend; but my disgust at the time extended itself to him also; so I was by no means sorry that his accidental absence from town gave me the opportunity of avoiding a formal adieu.

Behold me, then, like the Apostle of the Gentiles, established *pro tempore* "in mine own hired house," in other words, tenant of a garret at three shillings a-week, in a lodging-house near the foot of the Covenant Close; master of a very tolerable wardrobe, (for you may well suppose I had run out considerably as to such matters during these months of idleness and folly,) my father's gold watch and Andrew Ferrara,—a cheque for L.100 upon the Bank of Scotland,—and some five guineas odd shillings in cash,—master, moreover, of a

strong and muscular body—and perhaps not quite master of an active, aimless, and miserable mind.

I spent the day in building and demolishing a variety, not of *castles* in the air certainly, but of what served the same purpose, and in the evening repaired to a neighbouring tavern, where I knew I was most likely to meet with the most familiar of my recent associates—one Spreule, a medical student, a clever shrewd lively fellow, though certainly no great head for a consultation touching life and fortune, whatever he might be in a case of life and death. Tom left the crowded room which he was enlivening, and adjourned with me very good-naturedly, into a smaller one, where, not to waste words, we both prosed away for an hour or two, as if we had been two Lycurguses, shaping and arraying the future duties and destinies of half the globe. Tom was clear for medicine—I confessed myself inclined to give that walk the preference over any of the other modes of peaceful life within the scope of my chances, but avowed, upon the whole, that I still thought I should like the sword better than any modification of the gown. Tom laughed at this very heartily; pointed out, as he

imagined, in a most satisfactory manner, the absurdity of going to be shot at, without the smallest probability of ever being promoted for anything I could do, or remembered for anything I could suffer. But these arguments had no more effect with me than they have had with so many millions of better men, from the days of the Flood down to those of the French Revolution. On the contrary, what was only one, though certainly rather the most favoured one, of many plans in the morning, became now, merely because it had found a keen opponent in the person of a friend, not merely the favourite of a seraglio, but the one only flame—the *passion*. To say truth, my most earnest desire was to be at a distance from Scotland, and I knew of nothing that was so likely to serve for my passport as a red coat.

My friend, perceiving my resolution was taken, now began to inquire through what channel of interest (since money was evidently only the question) I proposed to procure a commission. Here, I confess, he had the better of me; I was sorely puzzled to point out anything that could even be mistaken for a fair prospect of success as to this

matter. However, after a good deal of discussion, it was settled that my best plan would be to begin by calling on a certain noble lord, then resident in Edinburgh, with whom I had no sort of acquaintance, certainly, but who had, I well knew, served in the same battalion with my father at the Havannah, and whose influence, I had also some reason to believe, had been exerted in his old comrade's behalf at the time of my uncle's forfeiture. I determined, therefore, to draw up my memorial, and carry it to his lordship's house in the morning.

The preparation of this paper, however, was a matter of some difficulty. I was anxious to preface my request of his lordship's interference in my own favour, with some little apology for some parts of my behaviour, of which I supposed it impossible he should not have heard. The task was in itself not easy, and I had many internal qualms to suppress in the course of grappling with it. It was not finished till late in the day, in short; and I did not carry, but sent it—intimating, however, that I should have the honour of calling for an answer the morning afterwards.

Accordingly I was at the door of his house as early as I thought consistent with propriety, and after cooling my heels for some time in an antichamber, was introduced to the presence of the Peer. You may suppose that I was not without considerable feelings of trepidation—but let that pass.

I found a much older man than I had expected, and as unlike what my notion of an old soldier had been as was possible; but, in spite of a stately figure, and a nose of the most aristocratic prominence, lively, affable, and airy in the highest degree. His lady was knitting, and he had apparently been winding worsted ere I disturbed the family party; for two high-backed chairs, with a skein or two across them, were conspicuous in the middle of the room, and there was certainly nothing on the table in the shape of a book, or even of a newspaper. The couple, indeed, seemed to be full of sympathy—a most amiable picture of conjugal bliss. I was overpowered with their lofty courtesies.

After a world of civil nothings, we proceeded to business. "And so, Mr Wald, and so you

have lost the plea—well, I'm sorry indeed—Lady Sorn and I were just talking of you—Bless my heart, won't you appeal? won't you appeal? won't you try the Lords? he! he! he!"

"Ah, yes, indeed, Mr Wald," said the Countess, "you must take my lord's advice. I think no one has had better opportunities—take his advice, young gentleman—try London. You will turn the tables on them yet, perhaps, he! he! he!" and she nodded her highly powdered curls, and my lord echoed, "He! he! turn the tables! —very good, indeed, he! he! turn the tables!"

"Indeed," said I, "I already repent most sincerely having meddled with the thing at all—I endeavoured in my letter to satisfy your lordship as to this."

"Very good, indeed, ah! very good—apologize for trying to get back your estate! very good indeed—He! he! he!"

"My father's intentions, my lord, should to me have been sacred, and——"

"O Lord! O Lord! what a foolish fellow my old friend (beg your pardon) was pleased to make of himself! Leave the estate back again to the

forfeited line! Such a joke, Di!—Did you ever hear the like of it, my love? Cut out his own son! —he! he! Oh fie! Oh fie! I can't help laughing at the notion of it—He! he!"

"And why did you not marry the young lady?" cried the Countess, pointing her large black dim old eyes upon me, over her spectacles—"Would not that have done, my lord?"

"Very good indeed—He! he!—Why did not you marry her?—a comely girl too, i'faith—a pretty body enough—He! he! he!"

"That's past praying for, however," said I, forcing a smile.

"True, true—very good indeed; she's woo'd and married and a', as the old song says." And his lordship hummed a bar or two of the air.

I smiled again, and then ventured to remind the Peer, that the object of my visit was to inquire if his lordship could in any way favour my views as to the army.

"True, true—the army," said he, a little more gravely; "it was the army you wrote about. But, my dear sir, have you considered—have you really considered——"

"I have considered everything," said I; "and, in so far as the thing depends on myself—"

"Will you do me the favour to stand up for a single moment—there now, my dear sir—there now;" and so saying, he stepped "most majestical" across the room, and took up a position close beside me. He paused for a moment; and unconsciously watching his eye, my attention was drawn to a magnificent pier-glass, which lined a spacious panel of the wall, immediately in front of us both, whereon appeared,—in tolerable contrast, it must be admitted,—the full-length shadows of our respective persons. The old lord had drawn himself up to his utmost altitude, and his topmost curl seemed about to salute the ceiling; while I—but you can easily fill up the picture.—"No, my dear sir,—no; no, no," said he, looking wise as Pompey's pillar—"no, no—I fear this will never do. Under the height—under the statute, certainly—Why, you don't stand five feet three, I believe—I fear you won't pass muster, my friend—What say you, Di?"

"O, my lord, *you* are so tall," lisped the other old fool—"you know, you were always *so* tall—

Do you remember what the old King said when we were first introduced?—I shall never forget it—it was so good—and makes me die when I think of it—He! he! he! Do you know the King, turned round to the Duke of Cumberland, Mr Wald—and observe now what his Majesty said, Mr Wald—'Mine Gott!' said his Majesty—He! he!—'what for a grenadier!'—His Majesty's very words—He! he!"

"And do you remember, Di, what the Duke said?—You must know, Mr Wald, that the Duke and I were always very well—very well, indeed, with his Royal Highness!—He! he!—Would you believe it, Mr Wald—his Royal Highness said, 'An please your Majesty,' says he, 'he need not stickle for a long ladder when he heads an escalading party.'—Very comical notion, indeed, of his Highness—very queer, indeed—He! he! he!"

At this interesting moment, the door of the room was thrown open, and I saw three or four ladies and gentlemen advancing. My lord dropt his hand on my shoulder as he made his seventh bow, and drawing me aside, whispered hastily into my ear, "No, no, my dear young gentleman—

you may depend on it, you have mistaken your line—under the statute considerably,—'pon honour. —What would you think of the sea?—let me hear what you think of the sea—The sea's not a bad idea—What say you to the quarter-deck?—Good idea, 'faith!—Good morning, my dear Mr Wald—happy to see you again at Sorn-House—He! he!"

And so I was bowed out of the presence, and had the satisfaction of shuffling through the anti-chamber to the tune, delightfully mellowed by the intervention of the folding doors, however, of "he! he! he!" There was no one in waiting there, as it happened; so I paused for a moment ere I reached the staircase, to contemplate a most noble portrait of the old owl, leaning, in full regimentals, and in an attitude of the most splendid description, upon his charger—a city storming, as usual, in the back-ground.

Mortified and disappointed, as I might well be, I could not help joining in the laugh with which Mr Spreule received my narrative. He insisted on my accompanying him to his favourite haunt, where some of his brothers of the scalpel were, he

said, to dine that day in honour of one of their number, who, having just received his diploma, was to set off next morning for his native country, Ireland. I knew very well that the society was not likely to be of the most courtly order; but, after what I had just encountered by way of specimen of "*Ista Fortuna*," I was, I must own, not over much disposed to be scrupulous on this score: and I may also confess, since I am about it, that I had some dread of a solitary evening. To the sign of the Hen-coop, therefore, we repaired; and in company with some dozen rough, ranting, careless blades, I did my best to forget for a while the wounds, not of my vanity and my pride merely, but of my heart and my conscience. A merry crew they were, and as motley as merry:—three Scotch, if I remember rightly, and as many Irish —a Yorkshireman, a Cockney, a Dutchman, a Dane, a Yankie, a Jew, and a Mulatto:—stout, well-bearded lads, most of them—audacious whiskers of every dye—oaths and dog-latin in abundance; and no scarcity of gin and tobacco.

CHAPTER XII.

So it was that the wild ragamuffin talk of these fellows had something about it which suited my vein at the time. I pledged them in their bumpers, smashed tobacco pipes against the wall, enjoyed the crackers in the candles, the sparrings, wrestlings, and singlestick exhibitions, with which the flow of soul was diversified, and joined with the best of them in the long howling choruses of their Fescennine ballads. In brief, when, at a late hour of the night, I understood that five or six of the party, Spreule included, were engaged to set off upon a professional expedition to a country churchyard, situated some ten or twelve miles out of town, in the madness of that most feverish of all tipsinesses, which takes place, when Bacchus triumphs over a system full of undigested and fer-

menting bile, I agreed to make one in this worshipful crusade. Swordsticks and bludgeons of every shape were ready in a corner of the room; and we took our departure at the appointed hour, two in a gig, and the rest of us mounted on the stoutest hacks that the representative of the West-Riding had been able to pick up in the Canongate stables.

We rode as rapidly as the darkness of the night would permit along those by-ways which prudence induced our leader to prefer: and picketing our horses in a fir plantation when we came within a few hundred yards of the scene of action, proceeded towards it in a body, with our arms, pickaxes, and sacks, all in order. We halted, however, for a minute or two at the top of the little hill that looks down on the village, and dispatched a scout to see if the coast was clear. The whistle to advance was soon heard; and, when we had cleared the wall, we found the sexton in his night-cap, true to his appointment.

He withdrew the moment he had pointed out the spot, and I was one of two that remained to keep watch by the stile leading into the village.

By this time the east had begun to shew some distant symptoms of blushing, so that our youths lost no time in their operations. Vigorously did they ply their pickaxes and shovels, and dreary enough were the echoes which the solitary little churchyard gave back from its dim grey stones and mouldering wall. The clock in the adjoining steeple struck two as they were lifting out the body; but that sound gave no interruption. The next moment a shot was fired—a troop of half-naked men, with pitchforks and scythes, came bounding in different places over the wall. All was tumult and uproar; and, seeing those who had been busy at the grave scampering, my companion and I were fain to follow the example. Indeed, the number of the assailants who had already appeared was enough to put anything like a steady resistance out of the question; but, at any rate, the church-bell had begun to toll, and it was evident the whole hamlet would be up instantly.

We fled, therefore; but we did not all run in the same direction. My friend and I mistook a turning, and plunged down a lane, which, instead

of bringing us to the place where the horses were fastened, terminated, almost immediately, upon the margin of a small river, of which hitherto I had seen nothing. Curses, and stones too, were by this time flying thick enough behind us, and we both plunged without hesitation into the stream. I was a noble swimmer, and was delighted to find the water deep; my companion also swam well, and we kept pretty near each other until I think we were three-parts of the way over. I was in the act of remarking, that we should do very well yet, as none of the peasants seemed to have taken the water—when I was totally stunned. I just remember the water flashing before my eyes. Down went the brick-bat, and down went Matthew Wald.

I awoke with a start, and found myself sitting in a strange bed, surrounded with I know not how many strange faces. I had just time to get a glimpse of a bason of blood on the one side of me, and a bunch of smoking feathers on the other, and then fell back again upon my pillow in a sort of half-swoon, which held me blind and motionless for some minutes, but not so deaf that I could not understand there was a grand discussion going on

about the comparative merits of venesection and volatile alkalis, both of which had, it seemed, been tried; while a third voice, I thought it was a female one, was croaking the paramount claims of tobacco-water.

My stupor, however, was dispersed once more by a bumper of brandy forced down my throat; and, by degrees, I began to recollect myself and my faculties. I began to say something; but the instant this was observed, one of the attendants laid a hand on my mouth—the blankets were stuffed in about my shoulders—the bed-curtains dropt; and I perceived that neither company nor candle-light were judged suitable to my condition.

I felt, after a little recollection, very much as if I had undergone a severe cudgelling. My head was like to rend if I turned it one jot to the right or the left; my limbs were full of cold creeping pains; and my breast laboured under a mixed sensation of bruises, aches, and weight—leaden weight. I was, however, altogether powerless and feeble—I lay as in a sort of dream—my ears full of a rushing and roaring sound, as of a thousand rivers—every faculty asleep or bewildered. At

length, a feeling of heat began to steal slowly over me, and I fell asleep in good earnest.

How long I slept I do not exactly know; but I lay still for a long time after I was awake, ere I thought of making any effort—to such a degree had I been enfeebled—and so true (applied as it ought to be the case of hanged and drowned men) is the poet's

> "Facilis descensus Averni;—
> Sed revocare," &c.

However, I at last lifted aside my bed-curtains, and "was aware," as the ballads have it, of an old man of the most venerable aspect, with long hair as white as snow hanging upon his shoulders, sitting with a book in his hand by the half-opened window. He heard the rustling of the curtains, rose, and asked me in a voice of silvery sweetness, how I felt myself. But, before I could answer, he said, "Nay, nay, I was wrong to bid you speak—I feel that you are doing well—there is a fine moisture on your hand—you are cool now, my dear. Lie still, lie still, young man, and we will see what is to be done."

He glided out of the room, and returned in a

little while with an old woman, who carried on a salver some white-wine whey, and a bit of toast. They conversed in low whispers, and shook their heads at me when I offered to speak. I was so faint, that it was no great hardship to obey. I drank the whey, eat a mouthful or two, and then the female arranged the bed-clothes a little for me, and they both left me—but not until the old gentleman had shewn me that a bell-cord was fastened to the end of the pillow-slip, and whispered in my ear, with a placid and benignant smile, "Good night—you will be yourself to-morrow—Blessed be the mercy that has saved you!"

CHAPTER XIII.

The old woman-servant was the first person who came to my bedside in the morning, and from her I learned, that I was in the house of Mr Meikle, the minister of Kynnemond; who, being roused by the tumult in his village, had gone out into his garden, and saw me sink in the river, which ran close beneath its hedge. The good man had not only watched my recovery, but saved my life.

Perceiving how much I was recruited, the ancient handmaiden did not resist my proposals about rising immediately, but fetched me clean linen of her master's; and I was soon up and dressed. I found myself a ghastly figure, to be sure; but I felt the *vis renovatrix* fairly at work within, and was anxious, as well I might be, to express my sense of the kindness I had met with, and also to

trespass as little farther as might be possible upon the hospitality of this benevolent stranger.

Before leaving my room, however, I made another discovery—a woeful discovery it was. In short, John, my pocket-book—the pocket-book that contained *the* bank-note—was amissing! My purse with the five guineas was safe on the dressing-table; but I rummaged bed and bed-clothes, and coat, waistcoat, and breeches, all in vain for my poor pocket-book. I remembered with despair that it had been in my coat-pocket; while, upon the true principle of penny wisdom, the purse with the coin had occupied one within the breast of my waistcoat. Some chance, however, there might yet be: my kind host might have discovered my treasure, and thought proper to secure it for me until I was able to get up. I rung my bell, therefore, in a tremour of anxiety; and, behold, the good old man himself came into the room, leading in his hand a beautiful little boy, of perhaps three years old.

"Ah!" said he, "and so you're fairly on your legs again:—and here's my little Tommy—he would not be contented unless I brought him with me to see 'the drowned man;' for that's Tom-

my's word for you, my dear sir; and, indeed, there's none of us can pretend to have the right one—"

"Oh! sir," said I, "before I answer anything, let me know at once if you have my pocket-book."

The old man saw at once how much I was agitated; and the glance he threw upon me confirmed, ere he opened his mouth, all my fears.

"Alas! not so—there was no pocket-book about you, sir. I trust the loss is not great."

I shook my head, and answered, "'Tis no matter."

"Alas! alas!" said he, "I fear it must be much matter. Speak, my young man—let me know what you have lost—let me know who you are."

I can't help wondering, John, when I recall that moment, that I should have been able to command so much coolness. I sat down beside the old gentleman, and told him, in a few sentences, that my name was Wald—that I had, by an unfortunate accident, been led to accompany some medical students on the expedition the result of which he knew; but that I was not myself in any

way connected either with their profession or their pursuits—that I was an unfortunate young man; —and, in a word, that, except these five guineas in my purse, I had lost in that pocket-book all the money I was worth in the world. It would have been no great wonder, surely, if Mr Meikle had listened to me with some distrust; but such was not the case. I saw the kindness, the simplicity of his heart, in every look he threw upon me. He squeezed my hand, and left me immediately, to give orders, as he said, for inquiring among the neighbours, and dragging the river. I confess neither of these plans appeared to me to promise much; but I allowed Mr Meikle to do as he pleased, and in the meantime continued to use all my efforts in calming and collecting my own spirits.

The worthy Minister remained from home till sunset; but he had exerted himself to no purpose. Not a trace of my lost treasure had been found. He communicated the intelligence to me with a face of the most disconsolate concern; but I had really entertained no hopes: and bodily weakness had so much deepened the settled melancholy of my spirits, that, strange as it may seem to you, I had,

during a great part of the day, regarded this loss as a thing comparatively unworthy of occupying my mind. After all, I said to myself, this money, if I had trusted to it, would soon have failed, and at the distance of a few months, or, at the utmost, of a year or so, I must have found myself pretty much in my present situation. I was effectually humbled within: and prepared to think any mode of life sufficiently good for me, in which I could earn food and raiment, like an honest man, by my own exertion.

The old gentleman treated me in such a fatherly manner, that, while we were sitting together, and talking over what had happened in the evening, I felt it gave me relief to open my heart to him; and I fairly told him almost all the events of my life. He listened to me with tenderness and gravity; and cheered me with a thousand hopeful suggestions. The faults I had committed, he said, appeared to have been sincerely repented. I had learned something of the world, and, above all, of myself; and surely, if I were disposed to submit to my fortune, and to make the best of it in a patient and unrepining spirit, there could be no fear

but that I might find the means of completing my education, and settling myself in some respectable profession in due time. "You were born a gentleman," he said, "and brought up in a way that must, no doubt, make it more difficult for you to encounter the rough blasts of the world; but this will soon wear off. You are young, and you will soon be strong again. Despondency is not for your years. The world is all before you yet; and, whatever you may think, you have already got over the time of life when poverty is most formidable—you are a man.

"Ay," he continued, "how often did my poor mother say when I was a lad, that virtue and a trade were the best portion for bairns!—You were born and bred in a hall-house, Mr Wald, and I in a cot-house; but for all that, my young man, flesh and blood are the same: and, ill-off as you think yourself, you will never have harder things to come through than I had.—

"My father," he said, "was a poor man—a common working wright in a little village not far from Glasgow. My mother and he pinched themselves blue to give me my education. I went

to College when I was about fifteen years old, and they sent me in cheese and vegetables, even oatmeal to make my porridge, every week by the carrier. I did not taste butcher-meat three times I believe in the first three years I was a student. But then I began to do something for myself—I got a little private teaching; and, by degrees, ceased to be a burden on the old people. Step by step I wrought on, till I became tutor in a gentleman's family. Then I was licensed; and I remained a preacher for twenty years—sometimes living in a family,—sometimes teaching from house to house—and latterly I had a school of my own in Glasgow. I was forty years old and upwards ere I got the kirk, Mr Wald; and my dear parents never lived to see me in it. I married—I had a wife, and I had a son."—

Little Tommy had been playing about the room all this while. The old man now called the child to him, and took him on his knee; and I saw, as he stooped to kiss him, a tear or two steal slowly down the furrows of his cheek.

"I am now alone in the world, Mr Wald—almost alone, as you see."

The servant came in to take the little fellow to bed; and the venerable man gave him his blessing, in a very passionate manner, ere he put him into her arms. I could not but observe with sorrow, that the child's loveliness was of an extremely delicate order; and thought I could see something like the fixed expectation of evil in the old man's gaze of affection.

He sat silent for some minutes after the child had been taken away, and then said, fixing his eyes upon me, "You have seen, young man, the frail offspring of frailty. That poor child will never see man's years! Alas! ought I not to wish that his father never had?—Oh! sir, you cannot know what it is to have a father's heart. My only son has bequeathed me no relic but one of guilty love—a poor, feeble, little memorial of guilt—I would fain persuade myself that I may say, of repented guilt."—

The old man groaned aloud, and paused again for several minutes ere he proceeded.—"The story may do you good, young man—you shall hear it.—

"My boy was educated for the Church: he

pleased all his teachers at the University, and he pleased us all here at home. He had been licensed to preach, and came—it is now four years ago—to spend the summer here with me; expecting, through some friends we had, to obtain his appointment as my Helper and Successor in my charge. But his mother's disease had been ripening in him: he became suddenly quite another creature—drooped from day to day; and the doctors declared that we must needs part. There was no hope for Thomas, but in a change of climate.

"We parted. He went to Devonshire, and remained there for some months; but all would not do. He came slowly home again; and he came only to die. He expired the very day after his arrival: and, woe is me! I was not with him. He had seemed so much better in the morning, that I had gone a few miles to visit one of my poor parishioners, whose family was in affliction. I came home, hoping, truly, I cannot say, but at least little, little dreaming how soon—They told me, sir, that Thomas, finding himself very ill, had expressed an agony of desire to see, and speak with me;

but I was not in time. My poor young man, sir, had breathed his last ere I could reach the house.

"It was the third night, Mr Wald, after my poor boy had been buried—you may see the place where you sit—he lies under yon white stone, the nearest to the eastern buttress—that is the spot where he lies—It was the third night, Mr Wald, and I was just preparing to go to my bed, when my old woman, sir, came into the room in a state of great agitation. Her looks were so wild, that I was half amazed; for, as you have seen, Betty is a staid quiet person. I asked her what was the matter several times ere she could make any answer; and at last she just said, 'Oh, sir! you may see it yourself. Two nights have I beheld it, and been silent; but I am neither daft nor blind—You may behold it with your own eyes.' Saying this, she drew me towards the window, and unbarred the shutters. She pointed with her finger to yonder spot, sir, and said, ''Tis there, 'tis there!' It was a bright August moon, sir, and I saw distinctly a figure in white seated upon my boy's tombstone. I saw it—I saw it move—I saw it rise up and sit down again—I saw it wring its hands

—and I almost persuaded myself that I heard a voice weeping and lamenting.

"Many wild enough thoughts came into my head, my young friend; but at last out I went: for I said to myself that the dead could not hurt me, and that I had injured none of the living. I went out. I walked round the church, and entered by the stile at the corner. As I drew near to the place, I heard sobs and groans; and, when I reached it—Oh, sir, the weeper turned round, hearing my steps, and the poor girl shrieked, and fell at my feet. Poor thing! a sore heart, to be sure, was hers."—

"A girl?" said I—

"Ay, sir, a girl; and the prettiest lassie she was that ever our village knew. Alas! Mr Wald, the truth flashed upon me that very moment. Oh, bitterly bitterly did she weep and sob as I raised her from the ground.

"This pretty girl, you must know, was a poor orphan, who lived in one of these cottages quite alone, and got her bread by sewing. Her name was Peggy Brown; she had often been employed about the house here; she was a sweet-tempered,

diligent young woman; and, though she was the beauty of the whole parish, no one ever had said a light word of Peggy until a little before this time.

"In short, sir, Peggy's shame could not be concealed; but, neither before her time was come, nor after, could any one get her to say one word about who the father was. She always answered in one way:—'Leave me the only comfort I have remaining: let me have peace: I will work for my bairn mysel.' To me also, more than once, this was the only answer she gave. She cried and lamented over herself and her baby; but to this point she was firm. The child was now three months old, sir, and we had all desisted from speaking more to the poor young thing, who certainly seemed to be as penitent a sinner as any I have ever met with.

"But the truth, as I said, now flashed upon me.—I read your secret, poor girl, I said; the father of your baby lies here—It is as I have said.

"'Oh, sir,' said Peggy, 'believe that I did never mean you should have this affliction to hear tell of. But I thought the doctors might come and

lift him, sir, and I could not lie in my bed when I thought of it. But gang hame—gang hame, sir; and it will never be me that will gie onybody a title to speak a word against him that's awa.'

"I sat there with the heart-broken creature for some time, and how long I might have continued I cannot say; but my old woman had at last gathered courage enough to come out, and she surprised us where we were. Upon seeing this, Peggy perceived that her secret *was* out: and we took her to her home, and saw her creep into bed beside her little baby. I kissed the child, sir; and it has been my child ever since. As for poor Peggy Brown, as soon as it was weaned, she went away, no one can tell whither. All I know is, that she had been heard to say more than once, while suckling Tommy, that he should never be disgraced with his mother if she could help it. And we now concluded, that she had gone off to some other part of the country from this feeling.

"Ah! sir," the old man added, "we weep when we come into the world, and every day shews why. Let us be merciful judges of others, and, ere we taunt the cripple, see well that ourselves be whole."

CHAPTER XIV.

I COULD linger with pleasure on the memory of the three weeks that I spent under this good old man's roof. That time, that brief time, appears to me like a spot of shaded green in the midst of a wild moorland. But I must leave it, and pass on to the Moor of Life, which I was about to enter so barely.

In the course of the conversations we held together, Mr Meikle did not fail to discover how anxious I really was to be set upon some honest scheme of industry; and, considering how limited his own experience of the world had been, it was no wonder that he should have fancied the best way I could choose, was the same by which he had in early life worked out the means of finishing his own education, and afterwards of ad-

vancing himself to the respectable situation in which I found him. In a word, he told me that the classical learning of which I was master, was at least equal to that which most young men who act as tutors in the families of the Scotch gentry possess: and that, if I could procure a situation of that sort, I might, while discharging its duties, find sufficient opportunities of pursuing any particular branches of study that might appear most advantageous to my own future establishment in the world. At first, I must say, the repugnance I felt to what I had been accustomed to consider, on the rough, as but a better sort of servitude, was so strong, that I had some difficulty in fairly bringing my mind to consider the particulars of his plan; but, by degrees, I was satisfied, that unless I bound myself an apprentice to some Leech or Lawyer, there really was little chance of my being able to support myself except in this way—or, at least, by teaching in some shape—until I should have time to prepare myself for the exercise of any profession that seemed to be within my reach. The word *Apprentice*, whether I judged rightly or wrongly of this matter, certainly sounded, to

my ear, about as servile as *Tutor:* and, perceiving that my excellent old friend thought he might have some considerable chances of favouring me in the search of the situation he recommended, while one of the other description, particularly in the state of my finances, could scarcely be expected, unless coupled with conditions likely to make it more unpleasant than usual, I gave up my repugnancies, and submitted myself entirely to the direction of his kindness.

After a little inquiry, Mr. Meikle discovered that a family in the West, where his late son had been for some time domesticated, were at present in want of a tutor for their children. He wrote without delay to Sir Claud Barr, (for that was the gentleman's name,) and gave such a representation of my character and attainments, that a few days brought an answer from the Baronet's lady, requesting my immediate attendance at Barrmains. I should have mentioned, however, that I had prevailed with the Minister (though not without considerable difficulty, I confess) to write of me, not as *Wald*, but *Waldie.* I was very anxious to be *incognito*, if possible; and this change, while

it seemed to me to secure my blood from suspicion, and also to render any alteration of the marks on my linen unnecessary, was at the same time so very slight, that I believe the good old man regarded it as comparatively venial.

Having gone into Edinburgh then for a single night, and privately converted the superfluous parts of my wardrobe into a little ready money, I returned to Kynnemond, to take leave of my worthy host. By the way, I saw none of my friends when in Edinburgh. Spattle, to whom I had written, was still skulking somewhere, in fears of the Procurator-fiscal, who, it seems, remembered certain former offences, and threatened to overlook no more; and I was not very sorry, after all, to be saved the trouble of a partial, or the risk of a full confidence. For the youth, as I have hinted, was by no means the most prudent of his species.

A journey of three days, performed chiefly on foot, carried me from the sequestered glen of Kynnemond to the opening of that noble and fertile strath, at the nether extremity of which the scene of my pedagogical *debut* is situated. The splendour of July was upon the woods, and the

whole valley glittered with cheerful hamlets. A fine river revealed itself here and there, in glimpses of light, among the deep green of the landscape —and, far down, the view terminated in a majestic lake, surrounded with dark, solemn mountains, on the summits of which the eternal snow lay bright as diamonds. I contemplated the lovely prospect with unrejoicing eyes—and approached, with slow and reluctant steps, the place where I was to resign, for the first time, my freedom. I arrived at the close of the evening, and was received, in a stately old mansion, by the stately Lady Juliana Barr—with greater kindness than I had taught myself to expect, and with a condescension which seasoned the kindness, as verjuice may plum-cake.

Her ladyship presented my proper pupil to me in the shape of her only son, a pretty boy of ten or eleven; but I was also introduced to a circle of fine young ladies, whose governess, it was hinted to me, expected that I should assist her in the departments of grammar and geography. A small chamber, divided by a slender wooden partition from a garret that seemed to run the whole

length of the house, was assigned to me as my domicile—and behold Mr Waldie established.

Two members of the family were not seen by me until next day—Sir Claud himself, namely, who was just recovering from a severe attack of gout, to which disease his shattered and bloated form spoke him no new martyr; and his eldest daughter, whom various circumstances of age, feature, and deportment, induced me at once to set down for the offspring of some former marriage. She seemed to be at least three or four-and-twenty, while the eldest of those I had seen over-night could not be more than eighteen: the darkness of her complexion was contrasted with the extreme of fairness among the rest of the sisterhood; and I perceived coldness in the blue glances of the Lady Juliana, and an unfilial submission in the deep coal-black eyes which Miss Joanne seldom lifted from her embroidering frame. The young lady had a face of singular though melancholy beauty—but her figure was extremely small and slender, and her walk seemed, I thought, to hint some very slight imperfection in one of her limbs. The sisters, on the other hand, emulated, each ac-

cording to her inches, the erect and portly stature of their commanding lady-mother. Matilda, the eldest, was really a splendid blonde—though I confess her cheek-bones were too decidedly Highland for my taste.

The mode of life in this family was characterized in general by dulness rather than by any other quality. The Baronet was in a very bad state of health, and also of spirits—a broken-down, unhappy man—often confined for weeks to his chamber, and never, on any occasion whatever, stirring from the house. He was far, however, from being a cross or sulky invalid; on the contrary, it seemed to be that he was dejected at heart, and took but little interest in anything passing about him. The Lady Juliana prosed to her daughters; the governess sat in the corner to admire and assent; Joanne was like one of the pictures in the room—and I was like one of the chairs or tables. They say the Turks allow their Christian slaves to talk freely with the inmates of the haram. Upon the same principle, the tutor of Barrmains, regarded evidently as a being of some inferior species, was not considered as entitled to check in any way by his presence the freedom of

the circle. The young damsels were flattered and scolded before me, as if I had been a stick; and, if the mother and the governess happened to be absent, the chits quizzed each other about their ball dresses and their beaux, in a manner equally unceremonious and unrestrained. Poor Joanne neither went to the county balls, nor was noticed by the beaux. Oftentimes, indeed, she and the little fat dimpling governess were left at home for a day or two with Sir Claud, myself, and my pupil, while Lady Juliana and her beauties were visiting.

By degrees the ceremony of the place relaxed itself when such occasions came: I was patronized by the governess, and Miss Joanne found the use of her tongue. I was consulted about books, and furtively made designs for embroidery. It was discovered that nobody could row the skiff on the lake more skilfully than Mr Waldie. Mr Waldie was even made the partaker of the evening stroll in the woods. The two young ladies were never afraid of the cattle when they had Mr Waldie with them. He was an excellent hand at helping over a stile or a ditch—and he had an arm for each when the evening was oppressive, or the ascent fa-

tiguing. I most involuntarily overheard them talking of me one day in the garden. Miss Blamyre said I was really quite the gentleman; and Miss Joanne that I was a very modest young man, considering my abilities. Miss Blamyre remarked, that if I had been taller, I would have been handsome; and asked Miss Joanne if she did not think I had the finest grey eyes she had ever seen; to which Miss Joanne replied rather sharply, that she had not noticed my eyes so particularly as to be aware of what colour they were. Whereupon the governess said with a titter, that she hoped she was as modest as any one, but that she saw no harm in distinguishing the colour of a man's eyes, any more than the colour of his coat. They then talked of eyes in the abstract for some time; and concluded, so far as I could observe, with mutual compliments; Miss Blamyre lauding the majesty and richness of black eyes, and Miss Joanne, with equal candour, maintaining that there was nothing in the world to compare to your genuine bright blue eye; and adding, that Lady Juliana's eyes were of more clouded azure than those of Miss Blamyre; which last notion

must assuredly have been the suggestion of partial friendship; for, in point of fact, Miss B.'s eyes were not azure at all, but green; while those of the Lady Juliana were not only as blue, but as cold and as bright also, as ever was northern sky in a frosty moonlight.

I found, meantime, that there was no want of time for my private studies; and being so fortunate as to meet with kind and able assistance from a retired army doctor, of the name of Dalrymple, who resided near Barrmains, I soon made considerable progress in the theory both of medicine and anatomy. These pursuits sufficiently occupied my leisure hours; and my pupil being a fine, obedient, and docile boy, the months glided by so easily, that I was really quite surprised when I recollected that I had now been more than a year in this place. During these months, I had once or twice corresponded with my venerable friend of Kynnemond; but with this exception, my new world was the only one with which I seemed to be in any way connected. Indeed, so strong was my feeling of this, that I seldom or ever dreamt of looking into a newspaper.

Lady Juliana and her two Misses had been from home for several weeks, and I and my fair friends had been proceeding, during their absence, in our old style.—But I have omitted to introduce you to a third fair inhabitant of the place, with whom also I had, long ere this time, formed a strict alliance. This was Mrs Bauby Baird, commonly called in the house Mammy Baird—a very aged woman, who had lived all her days in the family, and officiated as nurse to the Laird himself. This personage held a rank somewhat indefinite about the house; for although she lived among the servants, she had not only ceased long ago to do any work but what happened to please her fancy, but was often, when there were no strangers, admitted to take her tea in the corner of the drawing-room, where her appearance never failed to excite a very agreeable sensation. Her extreme old age, for she was far beyond fourscore, had not bowed her form, nor even, to all appearance, affected her vigour. Strong and muscular, she could still dance a reel upon occasion with the youngest. But it was her singing that was the chief wonder. She had a prodigious fund of ballads, and used to chaunt them

at the fireside in a deep, melancholy, steady tone of voice that had something about it singularly interesting, and even affecting. This old girl was treated with much respect by everybody. The young people consulted her about their ribbons, the Lady relied on her advice touching the house-maids and the poultry, and the Baronet, when he was confined to his chamber, took medicine most commonly from the hand of nobody but Mammy Baird. When Miss Joanne, the governess, and I were left alone—that is to say, with nobody else in the house but the Laird and my pupil, both of whom went early to bed—Mammy used always to be one of the party that drew round the fire after supper, to tell ghost stories—or rather, I should say, to listen to them, for Mammy was seldom troubled with any rivalry. To say truth, she was one of the best hands at that sort of thing I ever met with. But perhaps this might be, in a great measure, the effect of her great age. One cannot help feeling that stories of the doings of the other world come best from those who seem to be nearly done with this.

One night, shortly before Lady Juliana was ex-

pected to come home, when we four were sitting, as usual, about the fire, and Mammy, as usual, entertaining us with a succession of brownies, kelpies, little men of the mountains, wraiths, visions, and such like diet, I happened to say, at one of her pauses, "By the way, Mammy, I would not be surprised if you had some odd story or other about that picture that I discovered in the garret to-day? Do you know, Miss Joanne," said I, "I wonder they leave it up there; for it seems to me to be a better painting than many that are in the dining-room."

"What picture are ye on?" said Mammy—and I thought she spoke in a lower key than usual.

"Why," said I, "I mean a picture that I found to-day, standing with its face to the wall in the garret, when I was looking over the old china that Miss Joanne was talking of the other night.—'Tis a picture of a lady in a strange old-fashioned dress. I dare say you have seen it some time."

"I never heard tell of ony sic picture," says Mammy, rather roughly; "and I think a braw scholar like you might find better occupation than ringin the garrets for a' the auld trumpery——"

"Nay," said I, "don't be too severe upon me

neither, for you know I have the garrets to myself; and sure the picture may hang in my little cabin as well as in that ghosty kirk-full of lumber. I've been thinking of getting a little varnish to refresh it, for it has been touched with the damp; and if I had but a sheet of gold-foil and a cup of gum, I think I could make the frame shine again, for all its blackness."

"Young man," says Mammy, rising, "to a boiling pot flies come not. I'm thinking ye wad be nane the waur if ye had a wheen mair discipples—ye're surely fashed wi' idle time."

The old body withdrew upon this; and, some little time after, the party broke up. But conceive my surprise, when, on reaching my lonely citadel, I found Mammy seated there, with her lamp beside her, gazing upon the picture which I had actually suspended over my chimney-piece. It struck me that I had never seen Mammy's face wear the same expression it did now. She was pale as death, and her eyes were fixed on the portrait with a peculiar solemnity and sadness.

I took a chair and drew it close to hers; but she did not speak to me until some minutes had

passed.—"I see that it is as I guessed, Mammy," said I; "the picture has a story, and you will tell me some time what it is."

"And wasna that a bonny bonny creature?" said Mammy.

"A lovely girl, indeed," said I, "and a gay one too, if she was like her looks."

"Ah! Mr Waldie, ye little ken what sair hearts beat sometimes aneath the brightest een. But I'se tell you the truth at ance—the picture maun *not* stay here, it maun *not* be seen. Come now, like a biddable young man, and help me back wi't to the darkest nook in a' the garret."

"Tell me the story, Mammy, and I'll do whatever you please."

"If I tell the story, I'll be doing an ill thing," says the old woman; "but I ken your way—ye'll aye be dinning at me if I refuse;—and, to tell you the truth, I dinna think that after you've heard it ance, ye'll be very like to ask me again. Will you give me your word to keep the secret, young man?"

"I will, indeed," said I.

She laid her strong bony hand over my fingers,

and crushed them together in token of the pledge being taken, and began, as nearly as I can remember, thus:—

"Our Laird, Mr Waldie, was a very young man when his father died, and he gaed awa' to France and Italy, and Flanders and Germany, immediately, and we saw naething o' him for three years; and my brother, John Baird, went wi' him as his own body-servant. When that time was gane by, our Johnny came hame, and tauld us that Sir Claud wad be here the next day, and that he was bringing hame a foreign lady wi' him —but that they were not married. This news was a sair heart, as ye may suppose, to a' that were about the house; and we were just glad that the auld lady was dead and buried, not to hear of sic doings. But what could we do, Mr Waldie?— To be sure the rooms were a' put in order, and the best chamber in the halll house was got ready for Sir Claud and her. John tauld me, when we were alane together that night, that I wad be surprised with her beauty when she came; and, poor thing! that picture's as like her as it can stare; so you'll not wonder that John should have thought so.

"But I never could have believed, till I saw her, that she was sae very young—such a mere bairn, I may say: I'm sure she was not more than fifteen. Such a dancing gleesome bit bird of a lassie was never seen; and ane could not but pity her mair than blame her for what she had done, she was sae visibly in the very daftness and lightheadedness of youth. O, how she sang, and played, and galloped about on the wildest horses in the stable, as fearlessly as if she had been a man! The house was full of fun and glee; and Sir Claud and she were both so young and so comely, that it was enough to break ane's very heart to behold their thoughtlessness. She was aye sitting on his knee, wi' her arm about his neck—and weeks and months this love and merriment lasted. The poor body had no airs wi' her—she was just as humble in her speech to the like of us, as if she had been a cottar's lassie. I believe there was not one of us that could help liking her, for a' her faults. She was a glaikit creature; but gentle, and tender-hearted as a perfect lamb: and so bonny!—I never set eyes upon her match. She was drest just as you see her there—never any other colour but black for her gown; and it was

commonly satin, like that ane, and aye made in that same fashion; and a' that pearling about her bosom, and that great gowden chain stuck full of precious rubies and diamonds. She never put powder on her head neither: oh, proud proud was she of her hair! I've often known her comb and comb at it for an hour on end; and, when it was out of the buckle, the bonny black curls fell as low as her knee. You never saw such a head of hair since ye were born. She was daughter to a rich auld Jew in Flanders, and ran awa' frae the house wi' Sir Claud ae night when there was a great feast gaun on—their Passover supper, as John thought —and out she came by the back-door to Sir Claud, just as ye see her there drest for the supper wi' a' her braws.

"Weel, sir, this lasted for the maist feck of a year; and Perling Joan (for that was what the servants used to ca' her frae her laces about the bosom)—Mrs Joan lay in, and had a lassie; and I think ye may guess for yoursell wha that lassie is."

I signified that I understood her, and she went on:—

"Sir Claud's auld uncle, the Colonel, was come

hame from America about this time, and he wrote for the Laird to gang in to Edinburgh to see him, and he behoved to do this; and away he went ere the bairn was mair than a fortnight auld, leaving the Lady with us.

"I was the maist experienced body about the house, and it was me that got the chief charge of being with her in her recovery. The poor young thing was quite changed now. Often and often did she greet herself blind, lamenting to me about Sir Claud's no marrying her; for she said she did not take meikle thought about thae things afore; but that now she had a bairn to Sir Claud, and she could not bear to look the wee thing in the face, and think that a'body would ca' it a bastard. And then she said, she was come of as decent folk as any lady in Scotland, and moaned and sobbit about her auld father and her sisters.

"But the Colonel, ye see, had gotten Sir Claud into the town; and we soon began to hear reports that the Colonel had been terrible angry about Perling Joan, and threatened Sir Claud to leave every penny he had past him, if he did not put Joan away, and marry a lady like himself. And

what wi' fleeching, and what wi' flyting, sae it was that Sir Claud went away to the north wi' the Colonel, and the marriage between him and Lady Juliana was agreed upon, and everything settled.

"Everybody about the house had heard mair or less about a' this, or ever a word of it came her length. But at last Sir Claud himself writes a long letter, telling her a' what was to be; and offering to gie her a heap o' siller, and send our John ower the sea wi' her, to see her safe back to her ain friends—her and her baby, if she liked best to take it with her; but, if not, the Colonel was to take the bairn hame, and bring her up a lady, away from the house here, not to breed any dispeace.

"This was what our Johnny said was to be proposed; for as to the letter itself, I saw her get it, and she read it twice ower, and flung it into the fire before my face. She read it, sir, whatever it was, with a wonderful composure; but the moment after it was in the fire she gaed clean aff into a fit, and she was out of one and into another for maist part of the forenoon. Oh! sir, what a sight

she was! It would have melted the heart of stone to see her.

"The first thing that brought her to herself was the sight of her bairn. I brought it, and laid it on her knee, thinking it would do her good if she could give it a suck; and the poor trembling thing did as I bade her; and the moment the bairn's mouth was at the breast, she turned as calm as the baby itsell—the tears rapping over her cheeks, to be sure, but not one word more.—I never heard her either greet or sob again a' that day.

"I put her and the bairn to bed that night—but nae combing and curling of the bonny black hair did I see then. However, she seemed very calm and composed, and I left them, and gaed to my ain bed, which was in a little room within hers.

"Ye may judge what we thought, when, next morning, the bed was found cauld and empty, and the front-door of the house standing wide open.—We dragged the waters, and sent man and horse every gait: but there's nae need of making a lang

story—ne'er a trace of her could we ever light on, till a letter came twa three weeks after, addressed to me, frae hersell. It was just a line or twa, to say, that she was well, and thanking me, poor thing, for having been attentive about her in her downlying. It was dated frae London: And she charged me to say nothing to anybody of having received it. But this, ye ken, was what I could not do; for everybody had set it down for a certain thing, that the poor lassie had made away baith wi' hersell and the bairn.

"I dinna weel ken whether it was owing to this or not, but Sir Claud's marriage was put off for twa or three years, and he never came near us all that while. At length, word came that the wedding was to be put over directly; and painters, and upholsterers, and I know not what all, came and turned the haill house upside down, to prepare for my Lady's hame-coming. The only room that they never meddled wi' was that that had been Mrs Joan's: and, no doubt, they had been ordered what to do.

"Weel, the day came, and a braw sunny spring day it was, that Sir Claud and the bride were to

come hame to the Mains. The grass was a' new mawn about the policy, and the walks sweepit, and the cloth laid for dinner, and everybody in their best to give them their welcoming. John Baird came galloping up the avenue like mad, to tell us that the coach was amaist within sight, and gar us put ourselves in order afore the ha' steps. We were a' standing there in our ranks, and up came the coach rattling and driving, wi' I dinna ken how mony servants riding behind it; and Sir Claud lookit out at the window, and was waving his handkerchief to us, when, just as fast as fire ever flew frae flint, a woman in a red cloak rushed out from among the auld shrubbery at the west end of the house, and flung herself in among the horses' feet, and the wheels gaed clean out over her breast, and crushed her dead in a single moment! She never stirred. Poor thing! she was nae Perling Joan then. She was in rags—perfect rags all below the bit cloak; and we found the bairn, rowed in a checked apron, lying just behind the hedge. A braw heartsome welcoming for a pair of young married folk, Mr Waldie.—But noo, you've heard my tale, and ye'll mind your promise?"

She wrung my hand, and rose the instant she had done speaking, and pointed with her finger to the picture. I took it down, and carried it, Mammy holding the light before me, to the end of the garret. We laid it with its face on the floor, and Mammy piled I know not how many pieces of lumber over it. The old woman then bade me go back to my room, and I left her. I heard her heavy steps backwards and forwards for a little time, and then she went down stairs.

It struck me that the stair was very steep and narrow, and that I ought to see that the old woman got down safely. I stole from my room again, and, gliding across the garret, heard Mammy groaning below.

I jumped down stairs to see what was the matter, but found her standing to receive me with quite her usual aspect. "I thought you had fallen and hurt yourself, Mammy," said I.

"No, no," said she; "'tis no me that will trip on ony stair that's in this house; but you're a kind young man, Mr Waldie. Come away with me, since you're this length, and I'se gie you a

glimpse of ane or twa things mair that I have no seen mysell this gay while."

She always wore a bunch of keys at her girdle; and, with one of these grasped in her fingers, and her lamp in the other hand, Mammy silently led me, by many winding passages, to a part of the house where I had never before been. She unlocked a door, and stalked before me into a chamber, which had a close heavy smell, as if it had not been aired for a long time. The curtains were all close drawn, and dusty. Mammy took another of her keys, and, opening a cabinet in one corner, drew out a black satin gown, and a bunch of faded yellow lace. "This was her ain chamber, Mr Waldie," she whispered; "it's been keepit lockit up aye sinsyne, and I have aye had the key. That's the Perling I was speaking about. Look round, and say whether this looks like a gay lady's bower. Poor lassie! see here's mair of her bit trantlums—

"Oh! that bed, that bed!" says Mammy, drawing the curtains open at the bottom—"Little did she think ance that I was to stretch her on that very bed."

"Poor Sir Claud!" said I, involuntarily.

"Ay, ay," said Mammy; "Folks say there's naething dries sae soon as a tear, and it's true maybe; but, for a' that, I believe ye may weel say, *Poor Sir Claud!*

"Do ye ken," said she, whispering very low, and looking me stedfastly in the face—"do ye ken what the country clatter is about Sir Claud's aye gaun out by the back-door?"

"Why, Mammy," said I, "you are surely forgetting yourself—he has never been over the threshold since I came to the house."

"Ay, ay," said she, "I was forgetting; but, between ourselves, there's many a one believes that Sir Claud saw Perling Joan ae star-light night at the end of the shrubbery. John Baird never said the word; but I'm far wrang, if our John did not carry that to his grave wi' him."

CHAPTER XV.

I CANNOT affect to deny that I regarded Miss Joanne with a deeper interest from the date of my hearing Mammy Baird's sad story. The absence of Lady Juliana and her daughters was protracted considerably beyond what had been expected; and, the baronet being confined to his room, the trio were almost continually together.

One day we had been walking as usual together, and Miss Blamyre had led us, as was not unusual, to a seat in a remote part of the grounds, from which we had a delightful view of the village. The governess had been rather sentimental upon the situation of the parsonage, and dropt several hints, which, by this time, I really could not misunderstand, about the age of the Incumbent, and the fine provision which Sir Claud would, at some not very distant period, have it in his power to bestow

upon some deserving young man, in whose fortunes he might happen to take an interest. Miss Joanne also had been unusually pensive; and, the day being somewhat hot for the season, our walk had been prolonged rather beyond the common hour. In short, it was the dinner-hour ere we reached the house; and not small was our surprise to find on our arrival, that the ladies had come home unexpectedly, (some letter having miscarried,) and that they had not only come themselves, but brought a large, a very large, party of friends with them.

Your tutor seldom thinks it necessary to enter the drawing-room, until he understands that the company are about to quit it. Accordingly, I did not come down stairs until some time after the first bell had rung, and by this time it was twilight. A great wood fire was blazing cheerfully at the upper end of the apartment; but the region beyond which, on such an occasion, I was not likely to think of advancing, was quite sombre. A considerable number both of ladies and gentlemen were present: and Lady Juliana's high clear voice was heard like a bell above the hum.

Dinner was announced, and the party began to move towards the parlour. I stepped backwards, that all might pass—and behold—among the first, a lady, a young and graceful lady, arrayed in the deepest sables—The room was darkish; but the figure, the gait, the profile—I saw them all distinctly—With slow and stately steps, KATHARINE WALD glided by me: she passed the door—her long black train floated over the threshold. I was in a dream; yet my eyes perused every form that followed—and at last I was alone, and I had seen no Lascelyne. I cannot say what my feelings were. I followed the last of the company as if I had been dragged by a chain. I would have bounded up the staircase, but the servants were all arranged in the blazing hall; and I crept, I stole into the dining-room. My eye glanced once, just once, round the room; and I began to breathe again, when I found that I had hedged myself in at the bottom of the table, on the same side towards the upper-end of which she had taken her seat.

But I was completely in a dream. The lights, the crowd, the buzz—they found me, and they left me alone. If I eat and drank, I was no more aware

of what I was doing than the silver or glass before me. There was a ringing in my ears—a dizziness on my brain. I knew not whether I had lived an hour or a minute, when my neighbours rose, and I perceived that the ladies were about to withd.

Instinctively I kept my face to the table, and fixed my eyes on the oppos wall—the side of the room along which she was *not* to pass. I was fixed—I was a statue; and yet I trembled to the bone to think, that perhaps the skirt of her garment might be rubbing the back of my chair—even of my coat. She had happened to take the other way: she appeared right before my eyes—I had not power to avert them. On she came—she caught my dead gaze full; and I saw a sudden tremour agitate every fibre in her glorious frame. She opened her lips, and instantly compressed them again as if they had been frozen. It was the work of a moment—less than a moment. She walked on: the door was closed upon the last of them. I had met those eyes once more—who could ever read their hazel depths?—It was Katharine—the same Katharine—the same unapproachable, ineffable loveliness—and yet

how changed in aspect and in bearing! What cold sombre sorrow was this that had seated itself upon the world's throne of beauty? whence that vestal gloom—that more than matron gravity—that solemn, melancholy, dreary majesty? Had I seen her before she saw me, or only when she was seeing me?—had I seen or had I fancied? And why that sable garb—that attire of deepest mourning? Burn, dull sleepy brain! throb, throb once more, thou crushed and trampled, but still living heart! Is Lascelyne dead—is the traitor below the sod—are the worms feeding upon his beauty—is Katharine a widow—is she free? Out upon the thought! Fool! slave!—crawling slave! where is the dream of thy youth—the holy virgin dream?

Had the poor tutor remained in the room after the ladies were gone, it might have excited some notice—my immediate disappearance, of course, did not. I was gasping for breath, and I made my way at once to the open air. I stood, I daresay, for half an hour propped against the wall, just beyond the door. It was a dark windy night, and the old trees about the house were groaning, and the leaves falling thick about me.

Suddenly, two horsemen came cantering close by me. The first reined his horse, and the light from the hall streamed full upon Lascelyne's face. He dismounted, and I could not but hear what he said to his groom. "Tell them," said he, "that your lady will require the carriage immediately after breakfast in the morning. My horses at the same time; for we have a longish stage to-morrow."

"Yes, my lord," said the man: and I saw the one enter the house, and the other take the way towards the stables.

I prowled about the woods a while, and then denned myself in my garret: and I need scarcely say that I did not honour the distinguished company with my presence at their breakfast table next morning. But how acute was my ear! How distinctly did I hear the carriage-steps slap, and the wheels begin to roll!

CHAPTER XVI.

From this time forward, I was haunted by a painful dread that Lord Lascelyne and his wife might some day or other return to Barrmains, and a strong desire of removing myself beyond the chance of being again exposed to their eyes, in my present situation, began to stir within me. That I had, however, some other feelings, which warred, though with fluctuating and uneven power, against this, I certainly cannot conceal from you. The tenor of my life, meantime, held on in its usual stream; and how, or at least how soon, I might have decided, I cannot tell;—for fortune cut short my hesitations.

Sir Claud Barr was found dead in his bed one morning; and as soon as the decorous sorrow of Lady Juliana permitted her to fix her thoughts

upon such matters, it was announced that the establishment at Barrmains was forthwith to be broken up; that her Ladyship meant to reside for some years in England; that the young Baronet was to go to Eton school; that Miss Blamyre was to accompany the family southwards; and that, my services being no longer requisite, the friends of the family would, without delay, exert themselves in procuring for me some other situation of the same kind. I learned also, that it was not understood that Miss Joanne was any longer to form a part of the Lady Juliana Barr's household; and indeed this intelligence, although it could not but interest, did by no means surprise me.

That part of the news which most directly concerned myself, was confirmed next day by the factor, who on the instant paid me the arrears that were due to me; which promptitude I could not but understand as a hint that it was not expected I should protract my stay at the mansion-house. I lost no time, therefore, in packing up the few books and clothes I possessed, and in sending my trunk to my good friend Doctor Dalrymple's, who had, immediately after Sir Claud's death, invited me in

the most cordial manner to make his house my home, until I should have had an opportunity of arranging my future schemes with deliberation.

I had not seen the ladies of the family since the day before Sir Claud died; and I hardly expected to see them ere I departed. But no sooner was it known that my portmanteau had actually been dispatched to the village, than I received a message from Lady Juliana, requesting to see me in her dressing-room. I obeyed; and found her Ladyship, her two daughters, and Miss Blamyre, plunged, each exactly to the proper depth, in the solemnities of grief. A few sentences of most polite solicitude as to my future fortunes were uttered; the four white handkerchiefs were applied once more to their office; and I bowed my grateful adieu. The two Misses rose from their seats, and the Lady-Mother not only rose, but—for the first and last time, I suppose—she condescended to shake a poor tutor by the hand. Miss Blamyre stood still—but I saw what she would have done, and took the will for the deed.

Farewell then to Barrmains, said I to myself, as I was quitting her Ladyship's apartments—

but no—not until I have seen Mammy—and at least heard of Miss Joanne. I went forthwith in search of Mammy; and being admitted to her *sanctum*, found her seated in her elbow-chair, in her new black gown, bonnet, and red cloak. She had her great horn-headed walking-cane across her knee, and an enormous blue chest stood, doubly and trebly corded, upon the floor. The canary bird's cage, dismounted from its usual position in the window, appeared enveloped in a pocket-handkerchief on the table; and the prints of King William, the Prodigal Son, and Mr John Knox, had deserted the wall, leaving yellow spots and brown outlines as the only memorials of all their splendour.

"You too a-flitting, Mammy?" said I. "This is more than I had been looking for——"

"It's nae mair than I had been looking for, though," says Mammy; "but I thought you had been forgettin' me a'thegither. Hae you gotten ony inklins o' a new place for yoursell?"

"No, indeed, Mammy; but it's not quite so difficult changing places at my time o' day."

"I kenna, Mr Waldie, how that may be wi'

other folk," says Mammy; "but for me I've won ower mony things—and that's ane o' them. I was brought a bairn to the meikle house, Mr Waldie, and it's an auld, auld wife that I gang frae't; but, trowth, for aught I've seen, the cuddie, wi' its nose to the yearth, is better riding than the hie-flinging horse. I'm just as weel pleased that I have my father's auld chimley-neuk to beik in, now that I'm failin', and a' about me failin'.—Ye've seen the Lady?"

"I have," said I; "and I have seen the young ladies too, except Miss Joanne."

"Ye may just as weel lay by the Miss, and ca' her Joan, like her mother afore her, noo—They've flung the puir lassie clean aff, Mr Waldie. Greeting for the father, and nae thought for the bairn—that's the warld's way, Mr Waldie.—But God strikes not wi' baith hands, young man: for to the sea there are havens, and to the river there are foords; and when the tree's blawn down, the birds may bigg in the bushes."

"But what's to become of Miss Joanne, Mammy?"

"And what should become of her, Mr Waldie?

Do ye think that as lang as I have a fireside, her father's bairn will want a corner? The lassie will be weel wi' me, Mr Waldie. I have mair siller than ye wad be like to guess the like o' me could have gathered; and Miss Joanne has a penny o' her ain too, God be thanked! that there's naebody can meddle wi';—and the house has been a' clean washt already; and nae fear but I'se mak Miss Joanne comfortabler than she would ever have been in Embro' or Lunnun either, with them that never thought she could spit white. But what signifies clavering, Mr Waldie?—Can ye get a straight shadow frae a crooked stick?"

Mammy had taken her own staff into her hand—so I hinted that I feared I was interrupting her in something she had to do; but she said, "Na, na, I've three kists awa' already, forbye Miss Joanne's things—and this ane and the dickie are a' that's to gang wi' mysell, in the cart, when it comes back; but, that's true, they tauld me ye were to be biding a day or twa at Doctor Dalrymple's—ye'll maybe look in and see Miss Joanne and me in our bit shieling?"

"Most gladly," said I; "but where shall I find it, Mammy?"

"The Doctor's lass can shew ye the gate weel eneugh, man. It's no be me that will ever even her master till't."

"Come, Mammy," said I; "you must not lightly the doctors so sorely. Do you know I have some thoughts of being one of them myself some day."

"Weel, weel, ye may doctor a' the town gin ye like, if ye let me alane.—Ye'll come in some night and see us, then, ere ye leave the country-side."

CHAPTER XVII.

I FOUND at my good friend Dr Dalrymple's a reception of the warmest kindness. He and his wife, a truly worthy and unaffected old matron, treated me more like a son of their own, than the poor destitute stranger that I felt myself to be. They had never had any family of their own; and three very large cats, as many very little dogs, and a whole aviary of paroquettes, linnets, robins, tame ravens, and I know not what besides, still left a corner in their hearts for mere human benevolence.

The Doctor had already sketched out a plan for me; and it was far from being an unfeasible one. His acquaintance, the chief surgeon of the neighbouring market town, was getting old, and had been complaining that the country part of his practice was beginning to be rather too much for his strength.

"I will carry you to-morrow to the town," said he; "and introduce you to Mr Ronaldson; and I think, if he be really serious in his wishes for an assistant, my good word is like to go quite as far with him as another's."

We rode over to Maldoun accordingly the next morning, and were fortunate enough to find the old gentleman in the act of refreshing himself with a huge basin of barley broth and a bumper of whisky, after a ride of twenty miles, in the course of which, he took occasion to hint, he had forded three rivers, and earned a fee of as many shillings. Dalrymple took advantage of the moment with considerable adroitness; and, not to bother you with the particulars of a negotiation which out-lasted the beef and greens, and at least a bowl of toddy *per* man, the result was, that if I could pass my examination within six months, either at Edinburgh or Glasgow, Mr Ronaldson would then forthwith admit me to be his assistant—it being understood that the night work and the long rides were to fall to my share, and that I should be satisfied, for the first year of my practice, with board and lodging in the house of my principal, and a

payment of ten pounds sterling in cash. These terms, I must confess, appeared to me not illiberal; and indeed I may as well tell you at once, that I afterwards found considerable reason to suspect that I was obliged to Dalrymple in more ways than I had imagined at the time.

Here, then, was a fine stimulus to my industry; and I resolved to proceed immediately to Glasgow, (which for private reasons I preferred to the capital,) and devote myself, heart and soul, to such a course of labour, as might enable me to claim, at the appointed time, the fulfilment of this highly fortunate engagement. I had but a few pounds, to be sure, but I never despaired of being able to fight through the winter in some way or other. Neither toil nor privation were very formidable bugbears in those days to my imagination.

It was now October, and as the University was to be at work almost immediately, I resolved to start without delay. A few days, however, I did remain, that I might set forth with Dalrymple's full advice as to my course of study.

I had another reason, too, for lingering some

little time. I could not think of going without having called at Mammy Baird's cottage; and I felt that it would not be quite right to call ere the first bustle of their arrangements should be over.

I deferred this visit, therefore, till the last evening of my stay; when I easily found my way to a lonely and as lovely a retreat, certainly, as ever sheltered the infirmities of age, or the sorrows of youth. Fast by the green margin of the noble Ora, and embowered among the fading foliage of his birches, stood the little rustic shieling, for which that gentle child of misfortune had left the hall of her fathers. The hill rose precipitous behind, clothed to the loftiest crag with copsewood, from the midst of which, here and there, the red gigantic trunks of the native pine towered upwards with their broad sable canopies. The wide stream rolling in heavy murmurs close underneath the branches of the trees, its dark-brown waters gleaming with the gold of the sunset, appeared to cut off the wilderness it embellished from every intrusion of the world. A small skiff lay chained to the bank—and slowly did I urge it, with my

single strength, against the deep and steady flow of the autumnal river.

From without, the appearance of the cottage itself was rude, and even desolate; but within, the habits of another life had already, in the course of but a few days, begun their triumph. I had to stoop ere I could pass the threshold; and I trod upon a floor of naked earth. But the exquisite cleanliness that had entered with the new inhabitants, had of itself robbed poverty of all its meanness. Everything upon the walls shone bright in the blaze of the nicely-trimmed wood fire, and Mammy sat in her elbow-chair at the side of it, a perfect specimen of the majestic repose of extreme, but unbending age. It seemed to me that there was something far more grand about the whole appearance of the old woman, now that I saw her under her own paternal roof. The bluntness of address and expression, which had before been a sort of oddity to amuse a circle of tolerant superiors, was now the natural privilege of independence; though, indeed, I am not sure that the sense of home, and the instinct of hospitality, had not somewhat softened already the external manifes-

tations of a temper, which no change of circumstances could have essentially altered. I was received with courtesy—even with grace; and when, a minute or two afterwards, Miss Joanne came into the room, and, modestly saluting me, drew her stool towards Mammy's knee, I really could not help thinking, that, in spite of all the young lady's native elegance of aspect and carriage, a stranger might easily have been deceived, and supposed himself to be contemplating a family group.

I, you will have no great difficulty in believing, could not contemplate it without some feelings of awkwardness, as well as of admiration. The situation in which I saw Joanne Barr was new; and her demeanour, I could not help thinking, was almost as greatly changed. We had been used to treat each other like friends—some spell seemed now to hover over us both. Our eyes seldom met, and neither addressed more than a few syllables to the other—she took her work, and I sat listening, or pretending to listen, to Mammy. At last, I contrived to make it be understood that I had come to take my farewell; that I was to leave the country the next morning. Mammy gave me her bless-

ing very affectionately, and I bowed to Joanne. The poor girl said nothing, but (in a very low whisper it was) "I wish you well, sir, wherever you go." She did not put out her hand, and I retired, stammering more good-byes.

I jumped into my little boat, and had pushed myself a few yards from the brink, when I heard my name called in Joanne's sweet voice, and perceived that she had followed me to the bank of the river, and was holding something towards me in her hand. I ran the skiff in again, and she stooped to give me my gloves, which I had left behind me. Our hands touched each other—and, in the deepening twilight, and in the midst of some confusion of my own, I could not be blind to the blush, the deep, grave, timid blush, and the troubled workings of that half-averted eye. How much may pass in a moment! My little boat was out in the stream again almost instantly, and yet the words *return* and *hope* had been whispered; and while, in rowing across the river, my eyes were fixed upon the lowly cabin, I perceived that a shadow was still lingering in the window—and a soft dream floated over my heart, that some day I should in-

deed return, and that the world, after all, might still retain some visions of hope—ay, of tenderness and soothing consolation, for me—even for me. No fiery pulse beat—no maddening ecstasy of passion fluttered in my brain:—these were strings which had been snapt; but a calm, pensive feeling, was deep upon me. I cannot explain it. No man loves twice, perhaps, in the same sense of the word. But, although the pine-tree will never sprout again after he has been levelled to the ground, what need hinder plants of humbler stature, yet of softer foliage, to spring from the soil beneath which his ponderous roots are mouldering?

CHAPTER XVIII.

I LEFT my kind friends the Dalrymples, and was soon established at my new University. Having but one season to work there, I was, of course, constrained to fee an extraordinary number of Professors; and, by the time I had done this, and purchased the books which they severally informed me were necessary, I found my originally slender purse very light indeed in my pocket. As for surgical instruments, I was entirely spared that expense, being furnished already with a very complete set by Dr Dalrymple's kindness.

If I was poor, however, I had no objections to living poorly. After attending classes and hospitals from daybreak to sunset, I contented myself, young gentleman, with a dinner and supper in one, of bread and milk—or, perhaps, a mess of po-

tatoes, with salt for their only sauce. When you, in shooting or fishing, happen to enter a peasant's cottage, I have no doubt you think the smell of the potatoe pot is extremely delightful, and consider the meal it furnishes almost as a luxury. But you have never tried the thing fairly, as I did. Depend on it, 'tis worth a trial, notwithstanding. The experience of that winter has not, I assure you, been thrown away upon me. I despised then, and I despise now, the name of luxury. I never worked half so hard, nor lived half so miserably, and yet, never was my head more clear, my nerves more firmly strung, my bodily condition more strenuously athletic ;—and yet, I had come to this all at once from a mansion and table of the most refined order. True, sir ; but I had come to it also from a mansion and a table that sheltered and fed me as a domestic hireling. This also is what you never have experienced : I assure you, I used to sit over my own little bare board, in that miserable dungeon in the Auld Vennel of Glasgow, and scrape my kebbock with the feelings of a king, compared to what I had when I was picking and choosing among all the made dishes of the solemn table at Barrmains. A deal

table, a half-broken chair, and a straw pallet, were all the furniture I had about me: and very rarely did I indulge myself with a fire. But I could wrap a blanket over my legs, trim my lamp, and plunge into the world of books, and forget everything.

When a little time had passed, however, I found that, even to live in this manner, I must do something. I therefore made application to some of my Professors, and they were good enough to procure for me an hour or two of private teaching in the evenings. The money which this gave me was very little matter; but it was something, and it was enough. To say truth, I should have had recourse to this plan sooner, but for my anxiety to take nothing from the time which I could by any possibility devote to my own studies.

I confess that I sometimes felt a queer sensation in my stomach, when repairing after dinner to some wealthy burgess's house, my nostrils were saluted in his lobby with the amiable fragrance of soup, roast-meat, rum-punch, and the like dainties. But this was nothing to speak of. I was far more frequently tempted with the early odour of

a baker's basket; and, when I had a few spare pence in my pocket, used to buy a loaf *en passant*, and devour it as I went on my way—

> "Like hungry Jew, in wilderness,
> Rejoicing o'er his manna."

I had an aim before me, and I had bread, and I desired no more.

I was seldom destined, however, to mark many succeeding days with the white stone; and two unhappy accidents—the first was an accident, and I was accidentally concerned with the other—came successively to interrupt the tenor of this humble, peaceful, and, I may add, virtuous life.

In the dissecting-room, I one day chanced to make a slight puncture in my fore-finger with a very filthy scalpel. I thought nothing of the wound at the moment; but an hour or two afterwards, as I was sitting in my room, I felt a throbbing in the place that alarmed me, and, unbinding the hand, perceived a broad greenish pustule, the nature of which I could not for an instant mistake. I called to a brother student whose room adjoined mine,

and told him that I knew I had poisoned myself, and that, unless the spot was cut out instantly, I was a dead man. The poor young lad shook and trembled like a leaf; but I had my thread tied round the root of the finger, and desired him to cut forthwith. He made his incision bravely; but the moment he saw the blood spout, he grew quite sick, and the knife fell from his hand. I saw there was nothing for it but to act entirely for myself. He stood by me, and saw me, with horror, no doubt, grasp the cord in my teeth, and scrape the flesh clean off the bone. I fainted the moment it was done; but this was fortunate, for a neighbouring surgeon came ere the blood would flow again, and my poor hand was soon doctored *secundum artem*. This accident confined me for some time to my room; and, when I was able once more to go out, behold I had new pupils to seek, for my old ones had provided themselves in the interim with skin-whole preceptors.

The other story is one of a more serious character; and although I believe you may have heard it in some shape, I must be permitted to give my own version.

I lodged in the house of a poor shoemaker, by name John M'Ewan. He had no family but his wife, who, like himself, was considerably beyond the meridian of life. The couple were very poor, as their house, and everything about their style of living, shewed; but a worthier couple, I should have had no difficulty in saying, were not to be found in the whole city. When I was sitting in my own little cell, busy with my books, late at night, I used to listen with reverence and delight to the psalm which the two old bodies sung, or rather, I should say, *croon'd* together, before they went to bed. Tune there was almost none; but the low, articulate, quiet chaunt, had something so impressive and solemnizing about it, that I missed not melody. John himself was a hard-working man, and, like most of his trade, had acquired a stooping attitude, and a dark, saffron hue of complexion. His close-cut greasy black hair suited admirably a set of strong, massive, iron features. His brow was seamed with firm, broad-drawn wrinkles, and his large grey eyes seemed to gleam, when he deigned to uplift them, with the cold, haughty independence of virtuous poverty. John was a

rigid Cameronian, indeed; and everything about his manners spoke the world-despising pride of his sect. His wife was a quiet, good body, and seemed to live in perpetual adoration of her stern cobbler. I had the strictest confidence in their probity, and would no more have thought of locking my chest ere I went out, than if I had been under the roof of an apostle.

One evening I came home, as usual, from my tutorial trudge, and entered the kitchen, where they commonly sat, to warm my hands at the fire, and get my candle lighted. Jean was by herself at the fireside, and I sat down beside her for a minute or two. I heard voices in the inner room, and easily recognised the hoarse grunt which John M'Ewan condescended, on rare occasions, to set forth as the representative of laughter. The old woman told me that the goodman had a friend from the country with him—a farmer, who had come from a distance to sell ewes at the market. Jean, indeed, seemed to take some pride in the acquaintance, enlarging upon the great substance and respectability of the stranger. I was chatting away with her, when we heard some noise from the

spence as if a table or chair had fallen—but we thought nothing of this, and talked on. A minute after, John came from the room, and shutting the door behind him, said, "I'm going out for a moment, Jean; Andrew's had ower muckle of the fleshers' whisky the day, and I maun stap up the close to see after his beast for him.—Ye needna gang near him till I come back."

The cobbler said this, for anything that I could observe, in his usual manner; and, walking across the kitchen, went down stairs as he had said. But imagine, my friend, for I cannot describe the feelings with which, some five minutes perhaps after he had disappeared, I, chancing to throw my eyes downwards, perceived a dark flood creeping, firmly and broadly, inch by inch, across the sanded floor towards the place where I sat. The old woman had her stocking in her hand—I called to her without moving, for I was nailed to my chair—"See there! what is that?"

"Andrew Bell has coupit our water-stoup," said she, rising.

I sprung forwards, and dipt my finger in the stream—"Blood, Jean, blood!"

The old woman stooped over it, and touched it also; she instantly screamed out, "Blood, ay, blood!" while I rushed on to the door from below which it was oozing. I tried the handle, and found it was locked—and spurned it off its hinges with one kick of my foot. The instant the timber gave way, the black tide rolled out as if a dam had been breaking up, and I heard my feet plash in the abomination as I advanced. What a sight within! The man was lying all his length on the floor; his throat absolutely severed to the spine. The whole blood of the body had run out. The table, with a pewter pot or two, and a bottle upon it, stood close beside him, and two chairs, one half-tumbled down and supported against the other. I rushed instantly out of the house, and cried out, in a tone that brought the whole neighbourhood about me. They entered the house—Jean had disappeared—there was nothing in it but the corpse and the blood, which had already found its way to the outer staircase, making the whole floor one puddle. There was such a clamour of surprise and horror for a little while, that I scarcely heard one word that was said. A bell in the neighbour-

hood had been set in motion—dozens, scores, hundreds of people were heard rushing from every direction towards the spot. A fury of execration and alarm pervaded the very breeze. In a word, I had absolutely lost all possession of myself, until I found myself grappled from behind, and saw a Town's-officer pointing the bloody knife towards me. A dozen voices were screaming, "'Tis a doctor's knife—this is the young doctor that bides in the house—this is the man."

Of course this restored me at once to my self-possession. I demanded a moment's silence, and said, "It is my knife, and I lodge in the house; but John M'Ewan is the man that has murdered his friend."

"John M'Ewan!" roared some one in a voice of tenfold horror; "our elder John M'Ewan a murderer! Wretch! wretch! how dare ye blaspheme?"

"Carry me to jail immediately," said I, as soon as the storm subsided a little—"load me with all the chains in Glasgow, but don't neglect to pursue John M'Ewan."

I was instantly locked up in the room with the

dead man, while the greater part of the crowd followed one of the officers. Another of them kept watch over me until one of the magistrates of the city arrived. This gentleman, finding that I had been the person who first gave the alarm, and that M'Ewan and his wife were both gone, had little difficulty, I could perceive, in doing me justice in his own mind. However, after he had given new orders for the pursuit, I told him that, as the people about were evidently unsatisfied of my innocence, the best and the kindest thing he could do to me would be to place me forthwith within the walls of his prison; there I should be safe at all events, and I had no doubt, if proper exertions were made, the guilty man would not only be found, but found immediately. My person being searched, nothing suspicious, of course, was found upon it; and the good bailie soon had me conveyed, under a proper guard, to the place of security—where, you may suppose, I did not, after all, spend a very pleasant night. The jail is situated in the heart of the town, where the four principal streets meet; and the glare of hurrying lights, the roar of anxious voices, and the eternal tolling

of the alarum-bell—these all reached me through the bars of the cell, and, together with the horrors that I had really witnessed, were more than enough to keep me in no enviable condition.

Jean was discovered, in the grey of the morning, crouching under one of the trees in the Green —and being led immediately before the magistrates, the poor trembling creature confirmed, by what she said, and by what she did not say, the terrible story which I had told. Some other witnesses having also appeared, who spoke to the facts of Andrew Bell having received a large sum of money in M'Ewan's sight at the market, and been seen walking to the Vennel afterwards, arm in arm with him—the authorities of the place were perfectly satisfied, and I was set free, with many apologies for what I had suffered: But still no word of John M'Ewan.

It was late in the day ere the first traces of him were found—and such a trace! An old woman had died that night in a cottage many miles from Glasgow—when she was almost *in articulo mortis*, a stranger entered the house, to ask a drink of water—an oldish dark man, evidently much fatigued

with walking. This man, finding in what great affliction the family was—this man, after drinking a cup of water, knelt down by the bedside, and prayed —a long, an awful, a terrible prayer. The people thought he must be some travelling field-preacher. He took the Bible into his hands—opened it as if he meant to read aloud—but shut the book abruptly, and took his leave. This man had been seen by these poor people to walk in the direction of the sea.

They traced the same dark man to Irvine, and found that he had embarked on board of a vessel which was just getting under sail for Ireland. The officers immediately hired a small brig, and sailed also. A violent gale arose, and drove them for shelter to the Isle of Arran. They landed, the second night after they had left Irvine—on that bare and desolate shore—they landed, and behold, the ship they were in pursuit of at the quay!

The captain acknowledged at once that a man corresponding to their description had been one of his passengers from Irvine—he had gone ashore but an hour ago.

They searched—they found M'Ewan striding

by himself close to the sea-beach, amidst the dashing spray—his Bible in his hand. The instant he saw them he said—" You need not tell me your errand—I am he you seek—I am John M'Ewan, that murdered Andrew Bell. I surrender myself your prisoner.—God told me but this moment that ye would come and find me; for I opened his word, and the first text that my eye fell upon was *this.*" He seized the officer by the hand, and laid his finger upon the page—" See you there ?" said he ; " Do you see the Lord's own blessed decree ? ' *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*'—And there," he added, plucking a pocket-book from his bosom—" there, friends, is Andrew Bell's siller—ye'll find the haill o't there, an be not three half-crowns and a sixpence. Seven-and-thirty pounds was the sum for which I yielded up my soul to the temptation of the Prince of the Power of the Air—Seven-and-thirty pounds! —Ah ! my brethren ! call me not an olive, until thou see me gathered. I thought that I stood fast, and behold ye all how I am fallen !"

I saw this singular fanatic tried. He would have pleaded guilty ; but, for excellent reasons, the Crown

Advocate wished the whole evidence to be led. John had dressed himself with scrupulous accuracy in the very clothes he wore when he did the deed. The blood of the murdered man was still visible upon the sleeve of his blue coat. When any circumstance of peculiar atrocity was mentioned by a witness, he signified, by a solemn shake of his head, his sense of its darkness and its conclusiveness; and when the Judge, in addressing him, enlarged upon the horror of his guilt, he, standing right before the bench, kept his eye fixed with calm earnestness on his Lordship's face, assenting now and then to the propriety of what he said, by exactly that sort of see-saw gesture which you may have seen escape now and then from the devout listener to a pathetic sermon or sacramental service. John, in a short speech of his own, expressed his sense of his guilt; but even then he borrowed the language of Scripture, styling himself "a sinner, and the chief of sinners." Never was such a specimen of that insane pride. The very agony of this man's humiliation had a spice of holy exultation in it; there was in the most penitent of his lugubrious glances still something that

said, or seemed to say—"Abuse me—spurn me as you will—I loathe myself also; but this deed is Satan's." Indeed he always continued to speak quite gravely of his "trespass," his "back-sliding," his "sore temptation!"

I was present also with him during the final scene. His irons had been knocked off ere I entered the cell; and clothed as he was in a most respectable suit of black, and with that fixed and imperturbable solemnity of air and aspect, upon my conscience, I think it would have been a difficult matter for any stranger to pick out the murderer among the group of clergymen that surrounded him. In vain did these good men labour to knock away the absurd and impious props upon which the happy fanatic leaned himself. He heard what they said, and instantly said something still stronger himself—but only to shrink back again to his own fastness with redoubled confidence. "He had *once* been right, and he could not be wrong;—he had been *permitted to make a sore stumble!*"—This was his utmost concession.

What a noble set of nerves had been thrown

away here!—He was led, sir, out of the dark, damp cellar, in which he had been chained for weeks, and brought at once into the open air. His first step into light was upon his scaffold!—and what a moment!—In general, at least in Scotland, the crowd, assembled upon such occasions, receive the victim of the law with all the solemnity of profoundest silence;—not unfrequently there is even something of the respectful, blended with compassion, on that myriad of faces. But here, sir, the moment M'Ewan appeared, he was saluted with one universal shout of horror—a huzza of mingled joy and triumph, and execration and laughter;—cats, rats, every filth of the pillory, showered about the gibbet. I was close by his elbow at that terrific moment, and I laid my finger on his wrist. As I live, there was never a calmer pulse in this world—slow, full, strong;—I feel the iron beat of it at this moment.

There happened to be a slight drizzle of rain at the moment; observing which, he turned round and said to the Magistrates,—"Dinna come out,—dinna come out, your honours, to wect your-

selves. It's beginning to rain, and the lads are uncivil at ony rate, poor thoughtless creatures!"

He took his leave of this angry mob in a speech which would not have disgraced a martyr, embracing the stake of glory,—and the noose was tied. I observed the brazen firmness of his limbs after his face was covered. He flung the handkerchief with an air of semi-benediction, and died without one apparent struggle.

CHAPTER XIX.

I WAS interrupted a good deal in consequence of these unhappy incidents; and I had also considerable trouble ere I succeeded in getting my old landlady established in the Town's hospital. However, I had laboured so effectually on the whole, that I passed my examination with some *eclat*; and, in short, the first of May found me in full possession of the document which I had come in quest of,—as also of a few books and instruments, and a shabby-genteel suit of snuff colour. I made my appearance at Maldoun with literally one guinea in my pocket.

I was well received by the Dalrymples, and also by Mr Ronaldson, and commenced operations immediately.

The life I had thus entered upon is, I verily believe, as hard as any in the world. My prin-

cipal had long been in possession of the chief practice in the town, and almost the whole of that of the country round about,—a wild, pastoral district generally. I seldom lay down at night, until I had completely knocked up one of the stoutest grey geldings that ever Mull exported; and there were ten chances to one against my being suffered to sleep two hours without being roused again, perhaps to set off ten or fifteen miles *instanter*. No Arab of the desert wears out more stirrup-leather than a well-employed Scotch country surgeon. I may say that I lived on horseback. This fatiguing mode of existence was not, however, without its delights. I was fond of riding all my days; and I was also very fond of the country, and the country people. I enjoyed dashing down the windy glens at midnight; and I thought no more of swimming my horse across a roaring mountain stream, or even a small lake, than of eating my breakfast,—for which last feat, by the way, the former might form no bad preparative. I took a pleasure in observing the ways of going on in the different places I was called to. I partook in the bowl of punch, with which the farmer

moistened his anxiety during the confinement of his spouse,—listened to the tea-table chat of the gossips,—heard the news of last month from the laird, or the fashions of last year from the lady,—discussed the characters of Lord Granby and The Hereditary Prince with the old epaulette—the rate of the fiars with the minister,—tasted whisky reaming hot from the still,—and rode cheek-by-jowl with the justice, the exciseman, or the smuggler, just as it might happen.

To speak seriously, I believe your medical man has, at the least, as fair opportunities as any other of studying human nature as it is. The clergyman moves about without seeing much of the truth of things; for this plain reason, that people are always under a certain measure of restraint when the black coat is in the room;—a fact, by the way, which shews the utter absurdity of allowing men to take holy orders at a very early period of their lives. He who is ordained at one-and-twenty, will never have much more than the personal knowledge of a boy whereby to correct the impressions he may derive from books. Exceptions, of course, there are; but this you may

rely on, it is the rule:—and, I think, if even the Church of England said thirty in place of twenty-three, it would be a wise change. If the divine sees the picture through an unfair varnish, the lawyer, on the other hand, feeds his eyes, almost without exception, on the dark side of the tablet. All men, and women too, are mean when they go to law. Persons who, in general life, are even distinguished for generosity, sink scruples when the litiscontestation is fairly begun, and say "in war all is fair." Accordingly, who ever talked with an old lawyer without perceiving his thorough belief in the universal depravity of the species? But not as with either of these is it with the brothers of my quondam trade. No man is a hero to his valet; and few can play the hypocrite effectually to their doctor. No, sir, people cannot wear the mask always. You come in upon them at all hours,—you see them in every diversity of health and spirits,—and, if you have eyes to see, and ears to hear, you must understand things. I, for one, am free to say, that my experience of this kind leans, upon the whole, to the favourable side. It is true,

that I have seen the pompous stoic frightened out of his toothache by the mere sight of my forceps; and perceived, that it is possible to make an edifying appearance in church on Sunday, with one's wife and family "all a-rowe," and yet to be *dans son interieur* not a little of the tyrant. It is also true, that I have found most exemplary wives not indisposed to flirt with the doctor, when the husband's leg was in a box. But I have seen many more agreeable matters than these. I have seen the rough cynic of the world sitting up three nights on end at a bed-side;—I have seen the gay, fine lady performing offices from which a menial would have shrunk;—I have seen heirs shed genuine tears. The old proverb tells us, that "the sun melts the snow, and shews the dirt below;" but, in spite of fifty adages, I believe the roots of real virtue gain strength beneath the frost of adversity.

You wonder a little, I perceive, that I have indulged in this digression before saying anything about a certain romantic cottage by the banks of Ora. Many a time, nevertheless, had I found my way thither all this while. From many wide-

ly separate points of the horizon did my way homewards to Maldoun lie by that noble stream. Many a cup of tea did I drink in that little lowly cabin, which might now lay claim to the character of a very neat and comfortable parlour; many a comely slice of bread and butter did Mammy dip in her saucer of *carvies* for me there; many a potatoe did she skilfully toast in the ashes of that bright hearth; not a few *quaighs* did she brim from that queer, old, paunchy, Dutch bottle, the unobtrusive tenant of that quiet little *aumric*; ay, and many a time had I, ere the summer was over, sat under those old spreading trees, and watched the sun-set die upon that glassy stream with Joanne. Many times had I climbed the wooded hill with her, and, stretched upon the blooming heather, gazed, or seemed to gaze, on the wide rich valley, river, lake, and hamlet, sleeping in the twilight below. Need I whisper the result? Long ere the winter came to freeze the waters of Ora, I believed myself to be everything to this gentle soul, and would fain have believed, also, that she was everything to me. I will not disguise myself—I will conceal nothing

from you. There was always a certain dark, self-reproaching thought that haunted me. A thousand and a thousand times did my lips tremble to utter, "I love you, Joanne; but it is not *that* love——" A thousand times did I say to myself, "You are deceiving this mild angel.—But, then, why give pain in the midst of pleasure?—why scare those gentle eyes with the exposure of that seared and blasted bosom? No, no; forget idle dreams, and live. Be a man; rely upon your manhood. Your heart is not exhausted. Let the gentle stream well freely, though the torrent be dried up."

I loved this meekest of women; and I married her as soon as the year of my probation had expired.

The arrangements into which Mr Ronaldson and I had entered, enabled me to carry my wife home to a small but not uncomfortable house at the end of the Wellgate of Maldoun, with a very pretty little garden behind it towards the river. It had been strongly the wish of both Joanne and myself, that our friend Mammy should take up her residence under our roof, whenever we

should have one. But Mammy was decidedly against this plan; and we had the satisfaction of seeing a very respectable young woman, a distant relation, established with her in the cottage ere my wife left it. We were married in the presence of our venerable friend; and walked by ourselves, in the dusk of the same evening, to our new abode.

I must have been a savage indeed had I not been contented now. What a difference, after coming from a long and heavy day's work, between repairing to Mr Ronaldson's house, and going *home!* Instead of a dry, old, pigtailed oddity of a bachelor, poring over some antiquated newspaper, with his pipe in his mouth, in the chimney corner, or boring me with eternal questions and commentaries touching the cases in which I had been busied,—what a different sort of affair was it, to be welcomed, at the door of my own house, by that gentle, placid, affectionate creature, who thought of nothing but my refreshment and comfort,—who had my slippers airing for me at the fender, and some nice little supper, often of her own cookery, just ready to be served up! Although

I had now an income, it was but a small, a very small one, and the few hundred pounds which Joanne possessed had been almost all sunk in the house and its furniture; so that we had enough to live, but nothing to throw away;—of course, then, it was proper for us to live in a very retired manner, and we did so. The solitude, however, was all hers. I was out all day, busy, occupied, seeing a variety of people; she was at home, and almost always alone, working or reading in her window, or attending to the flowers in her garden. There could not be a more solitary, or a more unvaried tenor of life; yet how far was she from anything like wearying of it, or repining! I never found her, when I came home, but with the same sweet, contented smile upon her face,—always the same quiet cheerfulness,—the same gentle, reposing tenderness;—every look, every gesture, said plainer than words, "You are my husband—I am happy!"

On Sunday evenings, whenever I was not particularly engaged with some patient, we used to take a stroll together up the river, and drink tea with Mammy. The old woman received us with

looks of pride and joy, called us her "ain dear bairns," and declared she could now die happy.

In the meantime, I was not only constantly employed in the exercise of my calling, but making rapid and sensible progress in professional skill. I was fortunate enough to effect cures, that excited considerable remark all over the neighbourhood, in several cases with which my principal, Ronaldson, had had no concern; and began to be called in by not a few respectable families, which had never, at any period, employed him as their medical adviser. I also invented, about this time, the catheter that still bears my name; and its ingenuity and usefulness were remarked upon in terms of decided approbation, (I assure you, I was not the writer myself,) in the most authoritative Medical Journal then published in Edinburgh. A man had poisoned his wife in the country, and I being summoned, among the rest of the provincial practitioners, to give my opinion on the circumstances of the case before the Circuit Court of Justiciary at his trial, happened, as it was generally thought, to throw more light on the questionable points than any other doctor

who gave evidence before or after me, and was warmly commended accordingly from the bench.

These, and some other little occurrences of the same order, began to produce their usual effects on poor human nature. In a word, my vanity was touched; and it appeared to me, that, when the twelvemonth's agreement should expire, I ought to look forward to a more liberal share of the profits of a concern, of which I now regarded myself as the most efficient support, and with the drudgery of which old Ronaldson had certainly, ever since he admitted me into the partnership, given himself extremely little annoyance.

About this time, just when my intoxication was in tolerably rapid progress, the Marquis of N——, and his family, happened, after an absence of several years on the Continent, to come home, and take possession of one of their seats, which lies about fifteen miles up the river from Maldoun. We had no patients so far off in that particular direction, so that this arrival did not at first excite any interest in my mind · but they had not been a fortnight in the country ere I was sent for—*I*—not Ronaldson & Waldie—but *I*, Doctor

Waldie, to visit the Marchioness, who had had an overturn from her garden-chair, and fractured an arm.

I, of course, obeyed the summons with great readiness; and had the good fortune to perfect her ladyship's cure, in the course of a few weeks, in a style that gave entire satisfaction. Having slept many nights in the house in the course of my cure, I found myself regarded by all the family, but especially by my patient, in somewhat the light of a friend, ere my attendance came to be dispensed with; and, on taking my leave, I received a pressing invitation to revisit N—— House, whenever I happened to be near its domain.

The fee which followed the completion of this job was, out of all sight, the handsomest that I had happened to meet with; and you may believe, that in my then somewhat dissatisfied mood, it was with feelings of not the most entire acquiescence that I saw nine guineas booked to Mr Ronaldson, while *one* was all that, according to the terms of our contract, fell to the share of him who alone had earned the whole of this splendid hono-

rarium. I took occasion to hint something of my notions to my friend Dr Dalrymple not long afterwards; and the worthy man, generous in the extreme himself, expressed, unfortunately for me, a strong sense of the hard situation in which I seemed to be placed, labouring for an old bachelor's behoof, who had no near kindred that he knew of, to come after him, while I, with a young wife, and the probability of a family, was earning, by the labour of my life, nothing but a bare subsistence. The Doctor had, as I have hinted formerly, some private rights, of which I at this time knew nothing, to speak something of his mind on this subject to Mr Ronaldson;—and he did so; and the crusty old lad took his interference in so much dudgeon, that from that day I found myself very uncomfortably situated in my intercourse with my partner. To say truth, I believe the message from N—— house, with its consequences, had rankled deep in his bosom, and he was not sorry to have a pretence given him for shewing something of his sulkiness, without incurring the open blame of aggression.

His sulkiness, however, when he did shew it,

was what my temper was by no means likely to endure. One or two skirmishes paved the way for a serious bout of angry discussion. I spoke little, to be sure; compared with my old gentleman; but what I did say, was said with quite enough of bitterness. He, on the other hand, reproached me openly with ingratitude, and even went so far as to drop a hint that I had introduced myself to him originally with the settled purpose of embracing the first favourable opportunity to supplant him in the affections of his customers, and then cut the connection. This was intolerable. I was rash enough to tell him, that had he fewer white hairs on his scalp, I would have drubbed him where he stood. He absolutely foamed with rage, and I left his room—never to enter it again. Our articles were cancelled instantly, although their term had yet a good many weeks to run.

This rupture excited, of course, considerable interest in so small a community. Ronaldson was old and rich, and he was, besides these merits, a member of the Whist Club, which met regularly every night in the year, Sundays excepted, at the principal public-house of the town; and the mem-

bers of this fraternity, including an old half-pay captain or two, the chief quidnuncs of the place—together with *the* brewer, who was also *the* provost, and two shopkeepers, who had, time out of mind, officiated as the bailies, and a palsied slave-driver, from Barbadoes, who, by annual presents of coffee and ratafie, contrived to make both the male and the female magnates of Maldoun overlook all the questionables of his many-coloured establishment—and *the* writer, for, wonderful to be told, there was but one—all these worthies began, with one accord, to wag their tongues against me, with cautious virulence, in every corner where I had no means of being heard in my turn; while the other doctor, who had, half his lifetime, done nothing but turn up his nose at Mr Ronaldson, now acted a truly christian part, and upheld his old rival, tooth and nail, or rather, to speak more correctly, shrug and snuffle. The minister, on the other hand, who considered the Whist Club as an abomination, and his wife, who had been much edified with Joanne's strict attendance at church—as also the elders of the kirk, who lived in a state of perpetual hostilities with the municipal body, in

consequence of various disputable points of management, and particularly some conflicting claims touching the superintendence of charitable expenditure; these, and moreover the midwife, who, *cæteris paribus*, was in the habit of preferring a young married man to an old bachelor, with the old exciseman, whose head I had mended after a scuffle with the smugglers, and several young townsmen, to whom I had been useful on private occasions, and the milliner, who made my wife's wedding-clothes—all, and each of these, openly espoused my side in the controversy. No wonder that the contest was a hot one; and almost as little, I take it, that I had the worst of it, so far as the noble city of Maldoun was concerned.

In truth, I soon gave up all thoughts of the town; and even from the country I neither got nor expected much for some time; for I was scrupulous in revisiting none of my patients there, until the dissolution of our partnership had been announced publicly, and Mr Ronaldson had had every opportunity of re-cementing his interrupted acquaintance with the different families whom he had formerly attended.

The consequence was, that the old gentleman took a ride round the county, in company with his ancient antagonist, with whom (he now mentioned) he had formed a partnership, in consequence of that disagreeable temper, and unhandsome behaviour, which had rendered it impossible for him to avail himself in future of my services. Having thus fairly introduced Mr Mackay, Ronaldson left him to contest the rural practice with me, it having been arranged that the senior partner of the new firm should confine his exertions to the town, as he had of late been wont to do; an arrangement which, in point of fact, the state of his health and strength rendered the reverse of optional.

Certain awkward feelings of my own kept me back almost as much as the zeal of this new alliance; but by degrees many of my friends of the glens deserted the practitioner, (assuredly he was no great witch,) who had thus been, in a manner, forced upon them; and by the end of that summer I was in possession of a free and independent business, less extensive, indeed, but much better paid than that which I had quitted.

During all this time of trouble and vexation, nothing could exceed the composure and sweetness of temper with which my poor Joanne submitted to everything that happened. Her calm, hopeful, confiding spirit had a thousand times more real heroism about it, than my cold pride and stubborn scorn could ever equal. The only thing that I took better than she, was a tolerably clever lampoon, in the shape of a song, the production of the schoolmaster. This effusion, in which I was very scurvily treated, was communicated to her ears by the wife of our clergyman; and Joanne told me of it when I came home, with tears of sorrow and indignation in her eye. I saw that the notion of my being made a laughing-stock had almost broken her heart; but I sung it over to her myself next day, and my gaiety not only restored her to her equanimity, but robbed the satire, such as it was, of its sting elsewhere. *Spreta exolescunt.*

CHAPTER XX.

It was just when I was maintaining this battle with worldly difficulties that the itinerant Methodists of England first made their appearance in our part of the country.

My wife had heard these preachers once or twice, and as it appeared to me that she came home rather low-spirited, I endeavoured to discourage her from going near them again; but she excited my own curiosity by the terms in which she spoke of the eloquence of the person she had listened to; and one evening, when Mr Whitefield next came to Maldoun, I determined to accompany her, being desirous of judging for myself as to the man's powers of declamation, and also willing to have something in the shape of distinct knowledge in my possession, in case I should afterwards see

fit to oppose Joanne more seriously in her zeal for an entertainment, (such only I considered it,) the tendency of which I strongly suspected to be somewhat dangerous. We repaired together, accordingly, to the church-yard one fine summer's evening, and taking our seat on a tomb-stone, awaited, amidst a multitude, such as I should not have supposed the whole of our valley could have furnished, the forthcoming of the far-famed orator.

And an orator indeed he was. I need not describe him, since you must have read many better descriptions than I could frame; but I will say what I believe, and that is, that Whitefield was, *as an orator*, out of all sight superior to anything my time, or yours either, has witnessed. The fervour, the passion, the storm of enthusiasm, spoke in every awful, yet melodious vibration of by far the finest human voice I have ever heard. Every note reverberated, clear as a silver trumpet, in the stillness of the evening atmosphere. A glorious sun, slowly descending in a sultry sky, threw a gleam of ethereal crimson over the man and the scene. The immense multitude sat, silent as the dead below them, while the hand of a consummate

genius swept, as with the mastery of inspiration, every chord of passion. My poor girl sat beside me, her eyes filled sometimes to the brink of tears, with that deep, dreamy, lovely melancholy, which so often bespeaks, in woman's gaze, the habit of preferring the romance of earthly things to their truth;—and which reveals also her natural disposition to sigh for an unknown something, better than even the most exquisite of earthly romances can supply—but Joanne's look expressed frequently—as I observed with sorrow and anxiety, in spite of the interest and emotion created for the moment within my own bosom—not that gentle sadness merely, but a dark and almost despairing gloom. I said to myself, as I drew her arm within mine to go home, this man is a prince of orators, but my wife shall hear him no more.

I said what I thought most likely to turn Joanne's thoughts the same night; but although she did not enter into any argument with me, I perceived that all I said was useless. There are some points on which it is in vain to fight with a woman; —and religion, or anything that takes the name of religion, is among them. If I had been an idle

man, and always at home, perhaps it might have been otherwise; but I soon suspected that Joanne's long and solitary days must require, now that the first brilliant bloom of things was gone by, some occupation, or some diversion, to relieve their natural tedium, and acquiesced, or seemed at least to do so, in what I saw it would be very difficult to resist—and what, it also occurred to me, might, if resisted and defeated, make room for something even less desirable. Joanne's new fancies interfered, at all events, with none of the great duties she had to perform; and I found my home such as it had wont to be, and my welcome too. I often said to myself, Well, 'tis much better thus, than if my wife had taken to the paltry gaieties which occupy so many of her neighbours in the same sphere of life. Nor was there ever any time when I did not say to myself that her extreme was at least better than the other one of utter thoughtlessness and worldly-mindedness: (one of their own words, I believe, but no matter.) Still, however, it is not to be denied, that from the time when Joanne became decidedly tinged with this enthusiasm, I did harbour a constant feeling that

she had ceased to be all mine—only mine. Distrusting my own temper, I soon gave up entirely conversing with her on the topics of dispute. But occasional lapses would always, under such circumstances, take place; and I sometimes almost suspected, even when we were farthest from disputation, that she doubted whether her love for one so averse as I was from her own views of these things, were not, in some sort, a weakness that she ought to struggle against. Modest, gentle creature, I believe I on some occasions almost loved her the better for this.

I take much shame to myself, however, in confessing, that ere long I allowed my wife's ultra-serious mood, and the impossibility which I had found or imagined of dispersing it, to act on my own mind as a sort of excuse for following occasionally a course of life even less domestic than my professional engagements rendered absolutely necessary. When, by some extra exertion, I might have reached home early, I sometimes suffered myself to be persuaded, that there was no great harm if I staid where I happened to be; and, being in high health, and successful in my business,

I was, on the whole, possessed of a flow of spirits at this time that made my company acceptable among the rural lairds, of whose hospitality I thus partook. I rode a good horse, too, and was never indisposed, when I could spare the time, for a coursing-match; nay, I occasionally went to see the fox-hounds throw off, and was tempted to go on. This last, to be sure, was far from being a piece of mere imprudence; since many were the broken heads that I was called on to patch, to say nothing of a collar-bone to set now and then. In short, both I and my horse were well known in the field, and my lancet-case has sometimes furnished the means of absecting a brush. They called me the Game Doctor in the county club, with whom I had frequently the honour of dining.

My wife took this with her usual temper. It sometimes cut me to the heart, when I saw her come down in her bed-gown to let me in at three or four o'clock in the morning. Once—indeed, only once—I was brought home entirely drunk, and hurt a good deal about the head also, in con-

sequence of some squabble which had taken place between the party I dined with and a troop of smugglers, who happened not to have the *tact* to be on good terms with our host, a leading Justice of the Peace in the county. This gave great affliction to poor Joanne; and, I confess, she said some things next day that vexed me a good deal. I knew I had been all in the wrong; but my head had been cut, and my body was all over bruises, and I was in a bad condition for a lecture, even a curtain one, and from the most affectionate of wives.

But you can easily imagine all this sort of thing.—Let me get on with my story.

My wife was sincerely afflicted about this time by the news of the death of her brother, my late pupil, who was drowned in the Thames, near Eton, while bathing with some of his companions. Joanne had been tenderly attached to Claud, although I can scarcely say so much in regard to the young ladies of that family; and I also was not without my feelings on this occasion, for, in truth, the little baronet had always appeared,

while under my tuition, a most amiable and promising boy. This event was announced to us in a very formal manner from the Lady Juliana; and we soon afterwards heard that Matilda, now a great heiress, was on the eve of being married to a young captain of the Guards, who had the honour to be nearly connected with her mother's family.

I believe both of us would have mourned much more deeply for the youthful Sir Claud, had not other events followed rapidly to distract and occupy all our thoughts. Poor Mammy Baird was struck with the palsy in the course of the same month, and you may be sure my wife and I were in constant attendance at her bed-side, from the moment in which this calamity reached us.

At first, the old woman's mind seemed to be almost entirely gone. She sometimes spoke to us by our own names, but much more frequently addressed herself to me, as if I had been the late Sir Claud Barr, and Joanne her unfortunate mother.

" Marry her, Sir Claud; marry her out of

hand," she cried once, when we were standing together before her. "Ye think I'm sleeping, but I see and hear very weel a' that ye're saying. Marry the bonny lassie, young man. I'm sure it's true she says, that ye promised that; and if ye break your word, Claud Barr, ye'll maybe find, when ye're an auld dying body like me, that happier are the hands compassed with irons, than the heart wi' thoughts——"

The dream floated away; and, in a few minutes afterwards, she would be quite self-possessed again, apparently unconscious of everything that she had been saying.

Mammy survived the shock several days. The evening on which she died she had been particularly self-possessed, and, among other things, given full directions as to her own funeral. She also desired her cousin, who lived with her, to fetch her bunch of keys, and pointed out one which she told Joanne belonged of right to nobody but her.—"It's the key of the green trunk," said Mammy; "and baith trunk and key should have been sent hame wi' you when you were married,

but I thought, just then, the sight of some of the things might be a pain to you. Ye'll find a' your mother's bit odds and ends there. I gathered them together when we were to leave the Mains."

Mammy, when she found her end to be close at hand, desired the women that were about her to open a particular drawer, and give her the first thing they should see in it. It was a shroud, which she had many years before prepared with her own hands. They gave it her, and, after it was put on, she requested that I should be readmitted.

I found her lying in the garment of death, with a stern serenity upon her brow.

"Now kiss me," said she, "one and all of you, for I cannot raise my head again."

When we had done this, Mammy said, in a distinct and audible voice,—"Leave me now, bairns,—leave me, all of you; for I've a lang journey before me, and I would fain set off by my lane.—Leave me, and may God bless you all!"

I drew Joanne away, for I understood Mammy's eye. We all withdrew, and watched for a

while in the next room. At last the cousin stole in, and came back to us immediately to say that our friend was no more. She was, indeed, our friend. Joanne closed her eyes with reverential fingers; and the second head that I laid in the grave was Mammy's.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DAY or two after poor Mammy's burial, the little green trunk, of which she had spoken, was conveyed to our house at Maldoun; and I took an opportunity of looking over its contents by myself, lest perhaps my wife should meet with something that might unnecessarily give her pain.

I recognized the moth-eaten dress of dark satin, and the bundle of old yellow lace, which my departed friend had shewn me long before in the forbidden chamber at Barrmains; and a variety of little female ornaments, and shreds and patches of embroidery, lay beside them. Two caskets, one much smaller than the other, were at the bottom of all; and, after searching in vain for their keys, I proceeded to break them both open. In the smaller one I found two miniatures; the one representing evidently the same beautiful form

which I had admired in the portrait of the garret, the other Sir Claud Barr in his youth,—totally unlike, certainly, my recollection of its original, but so much the same with a picture of him in the dining-room, that I knew very well for whom it was meant. These I restored to their case for the present, intending to have them put into larger frames, and hung in my wife's bed-room.

The larger casket, when I forced its lid, presented to my view a packet sealed with three seals in black wax, but nothing written on its envelope. I broke the seals, and found that the contents were letters; the letters, in short, which had passed between Sir Claud Barr and his lovely Fleming previous to their elopement. My first thought was to destroy them immediately; but, glancing my eye over one, I was so much struck with the natural and touching elegance of the language, that I could not resist the inclination which rose within me, and fairly sat down to peruse the whole at my leisure.

They were all in French; and most interesting as well as curious productions certainly they were. I have never read many genuine love-letters, and

I doubt very much whether most of them would reward a third person for the trouble of reading them. But here—I speak of the poor girl's epistles—there was such an openness of heart, such a free, infantine simplicity of expression, such a pride of passion, that I knew not whether my admiration and pity, or my scorn and indignation, were uppermost. One letter, written just before the elopement, was a thing the like of which I have never seen,—I had never even imagined. Such lamentation, such reproaches, mingled with such floods of tenderness, such intense yet remorseful lingering over an intoxication of terror, joy, pride, and tears! Men, after all, probably know but little of what passes in the secret heart of woman; and how little does woman dare to say, far less to write, that might illuminate them! But here was the heart of a woman, beating, and burning, and trembling, beneath the bosom of an artless child. No concealment—none whatever;—the victim glorying in the sacrifice in the same breath with which she deplored herself!—How much the meanest and the basest of all selfishness is man's!

The deceiver's letters were written in bad French, comparatively speaking, and altogether bore the impress of a totally inferior mind; yet some of them were not without their bursts of eloquence too. At the beginning, said I to myself, this man meant not to betray her. I read a long letter through; and found, after a world of verbiage, one line that startled me,—" Oui, mon ange, oui, je vous le jure; VOUS SEREZ, VOUS ETES, MON EPOUSE."

I knew enough of the law of my country, to be aware of the extreme danger to which the use of expressions of this sort had often led; and I could not help passing a sleepless night, revolving a thousand fancies, the most remote shadow of which had never before suggested itself to me. Joanne observed how restless I was, but I resolved not to give her the annoyance of partaking in an agitation which might, I was sufficiently aware, terminate in absolutely nothing. So I kept my thoughts to myself for the present, but spent a great part of next day in conning over the section *Marriage*, in half a dozen different law-books, which I contrived to borrow among my neighbours. Still

I found myself entirely in the dark. I could make no clear sense out of all the conflicting authorities I saw quoted and requoted, concerning *consensus de futuro, consensus de præsenti, copulæ subsequentes*, consent *rebus ipsis et factis*, promises *in æstu datæ*, and I know not how much more similar jargon.

I recollected that one of the Judges of the Court of Session, with whom I had met sometimes at the county club, had just come home to his seat in our neighbourhood, and resolved to communicate my scruples to him, rather than to any of the pettifoggers in the country. Accordingly, I mounted my horse, and arrived about noon, with all my papers in my pocket, at that beautiful villa from which the Lord Thirleton took his title of courtesy.

I found his lordship sitting on the turfen fence of one of his belts of fir, in his usual rural costume of a scratch-wig, a green jacket, Shetland hose, and short black gaiters. A small instrument, ingeniously devised for serving at once as a walking cane, a hoe, and a weed-grubber, rested against his knee; and, while reposing a little to recruit his wind, he was indulging himself with a quiet

perusal of a "condescendence and answers," which he had brought with him in his pocket.

I waited till, having finished a paragraph, he lifted his eyes from his paper; and then, with as little periphrasis as I could, introduced to him myself and my errand.

"Love-letters, lad?" said he, rubbing his hands; "let's see them, let's see them. I like a love-letter from my heart, man—what signifies speaking—*semel insanivimus omnes*."

I picked out the two letters which, I thought, contained the cream of the matter, and watched his face very diligently while he read them.

"Od, man," says he, "but that lassie writes weel. I cannot say that I make every word of the lingo out, but I see the drift.—Puir thing! she's been a bit awmorous young body."

"The point, my lord," said I, "is to know what the Court would think of that passage?"—(I pointed out the line of Sir Claud's penmanship, which I have already quoted)—"You are aware how they lived together afterwards. What, if I may ask, is the law of Scotland as to such matters?"

"Hooly, hooly," quoth the Judge; "let me gang ower this again.—Troth, they're queer words these."

"My dear lord," said I, "I want to know what the Court would be likely to say to them."

His Lordship took off his spectacles, and restoring them to their case, rose, hoe in hand, from his seat—"My dear Doctor," quoth he, laying his hand on my shoulder, "it really surprises me to see how little the people of this country ken about the affairs that maist nearly concern them."

"True, my lord," said I; "I am very sensible that I am no lawyer. But it is our greatest happiness that we have among us learned persons who are able to instruct us in these matters when we have occasion.—Your lordship can easily inform me what the law of Scotland——"

"The law of Scotland!" cried he, interrupting me: "the law of Scotland, Doctor Waldie! Gude faith, my worthy friend, it's eneugh to gar a horse laugh to hear you—The law o' Scotland! I wonder ye're no speaking about the crown o' Scotland too; for I'm sure ye might as weel speir after the ane frae the Bullers o' Buchan, as the other frae

their Woolsacks. They might hae gaen on lang eneugh for me, if they had been content wi' their auld impruvements o' ca'ing a flae a flea, and a puinding a poinding—but now, tapsal-teirie's the word—But wheesht, wheesht,—we maun e'en keep a calm sough, my lad."

"I am afraid," said I, "your lordship conceives the law to be very unsettled, then, as to these matters?"

"The law *was* settled enough, Doctor Waldie," he replied; "but what signifies speaking? I suppose, ere long, we shall be Englified, shoulder and croupe. Isna that a grand law, my man, that lets folk blaw for forty years about the matter of forty merks, if they will, and yet tries a puir devil for his life, and hangs him within the three days, ay, and that without giving him leave to have onybody to speak a word for him, either to Judge or Jury?—My word, they might learn to look nearer hame."

His lordship was thumping away at the turf with his hoe all this while, and seemed to be taking things in general so hotly, that I despaired of getting him to fix his attention on my particu-

lar concern; and said, the moment he paused, "Well, my lord, I suppose the short and the long of it is, that you think there would be no use in my trying this question."

"Hooly, hooly, there again," quoth he, quite in his usual tone—"It's not ae stroke that fells the oak, and while there's life there's hope, young man. Do you really think that I'm sic a ramstam gowk, as to bid you or ony man fling the cloak away ere you've tried how it will clout. Na, na, hooly and fairly, my dear Doctor."

"Then your lordship inclines to think favourably——"

"Me incline to think favourably, young man! —tak' tent what you're saying. Do you think that I'm gaun to incline to think either favourably or unfavourably here, on my ain dykeside, of a case that I may be called upon, in the course of nature, to decide on, saul and conscience, in the Parliament-house mony days hence? Ye should really tak' better care what you say—young calves are aye for being at the end of their tether."

"O, my lord; I'm sure your lordship can't imagine that I could have had the least intention

of forming any opinion derogatory to your lordship's well-known impartial character. Really, really, you have quite mistaken me. I only meant to ask you as a friend, if I may presume to use such a word with your lordship, whether you thought I should, or should not, encounter the risk of a lawsuit as to this matter."

"That's no a thing for me to speak about, my good friend; it's my business to decide law-pleas when they're at their hinder-end, not when they're at the off-setting. Ye must advise wi' counsel."

A sudden light flashed upon me at this moment; I bowed respectfully to his lordship, and, without informing him of my intention, went round by the other side of the firs to his mansion-house. Here I inquired whether the young laird was at home, and was told that he was out shooting partridges, in a turnip-field not far off. I desired that he might be sent for, and the young gentleman obeyed forthwith.

By the time he joined me, I had sealed up five guineas, under a sheet of paper, and superscribed it "For Michael Thirler, younger of Thirleton, Esq. Advocate." I placed this in his

hand, and found that I had at least secured a most patient and attentive, if not a very intelligent listener. In a word, I saw plainly enough, that the young advocate, thus suddenly taken, was no more able to give me an opinion touching the law of marriage, than to cut a man for the stone—but this did not discourage me. I left my papers with him, saying, that the chief favour he could confer on me, would be to weigh the matter with the utmost deliberation ere he said one word about it; and adding, that I should have the honour of calling on him next day about the same hour, if he had no objections. I saw how much this arrangement delighted him, and departed in full confidence that I should soon get value for my gold.

Accordingly, when I returned next day, I received from the hands of my young counsellor, a long, formal, and masterly opinion, in which every disputable point of the case was gone into fully, and which concluded with a clear and distinct recommendation of my projected action.

The old lord came into the room, while I was conning it over, and, stepping up to my ear, whispered, " Ay, ay, ye ken there's an auld saying,

Young lawyers and auld doctors—and maybe half of it may be true." I nodded in answer to his friendly gesture, and received a cordial invitation to stay and try "whether a puir paper-lord might not hae a drap of tolerable Bourdeaux in his aught." This temptation, however, you may suppose I for once resisted. It was now high time that my wife should be informed of an affair that so nearly interested her.

Poor soul! she heard me to an end without speaking; took the lawyer's opinion into her hand and read it once more over; and then threw herself, weeping aloud, upon my bosom.—"I am not a base-born girl," she cried; "you will, after all, have no reason to be ashamed of your wife!" "Tears," says the proverb, "may be sweeter than manna."—Surely these were such.

CHAPTER XXII.

LAW-SUITS, John, are like the conversations of lovers, not very amusing to those not immediately concerned in them. I shall therefore spare you the voluminous history of the action of declarator of marriage, Barr *v.* Barr; and content myself with merely mentioning in general, that, after a prodigious variety of private letters and public pleadings had been interchanged, the lawyers on both sides were satisfied that the point was one of the extremest doubt and difficulty, and mutually recommended to their clients the settling of the dispute, if possible, by some compromise out of doors. My temper was sanguine; and the "savage virtue of the chase," as the poet calls it, was by this time in full excitement within me, so I treated at first this proposition with great coldness.

But when I found that I really had it in my power to establish immediately the legitimacy of my wife's birth, (a thing much nearer her heart, I believed then, and I believe now, than anything besides,) and to enter the same moment into possession of one-half of the estate of Barrmains—while, if I persisted in my litigation, there was at least a very considerable chance of our failing entirely, both in regard to the honour we were seeking, and the wealth consequent upon it;—I could not, I say, calmly balance these accounts, without perceiving that Joanne's dearest interests required me to accept of the offered compromise. The delight with which she heard me say that I was willing to act in this manner, (for she would never give her advice,) was more than I could describe. The arrangements were soon perfected; we were allowed to carry through our declarator without further opposition; and the estate was divided between the sisters, according to the judgment of three impartial private individuals—Barrmains house falling to the share of Joanne, as the elder of the two.

Here, then, was a reverse of fortune with a witness.

So long as the affair was of doubtful termination, I had resolutely stuck by the exercise of my profession, and we had, in no respect whatever, altered our mode of life at Maldoun. The change in our circumstances, therefore, was every way as sudden as complete.

We soon took possession of Barrmains, and found ourselves involved in all the tumults of rural congratulation. For several weeks we were never a day alone. Cousins remembered, half remembered, and before unheard of, arrived in troops, to claim Joanne's kindred; and I, my own name and family being of course well known by this time, was embraced, upon terms of perfect equality, to say the least of it, by all those provincial dons, who had previously admitted me to their society on a somewhat different foot, and also by many with whom I had previously maintained no intercourse whatever. Joanne, the overlooked, the forgotten Joanne, was hailed as the ornament of the county. Barrmains resounded with the bustle of eternal festivity.

Another month was mostly spent in returning the visits of the gentry who had thus honoured us.

By this time the winter was setting in, and we retired to Barnmains, rather wearied of the life we had been leading, and desirous of a little domestic quiet. We had arrangements to make concerning farms and tenants; we had also to consider, more carefully than could have been expected at the first, what our establishment ought to be; and I, for myself, began to feel that I ought to provide some plan of useful occupation for a part of my time. For, accustomed as I had been to activity, a very few weeks had been quite sufficient to give me some glimpses of the danger of ennui. My neighbours were, many of them, excellent fellows; and in a hunting-field, or over a bottle, I found their company sufficiently palatable; but there was not among them any one with whom I either was, or thought it likely I should ever be, very particularly intimate. They were squires; and I was one too; but I felt that I was not thoroughly so. I was a young man, it is true, but I had lived long enough, and in ways sufficiently diversified, to give me a feeling that the habits of my mind were fixed.

Was I happy, then, with this splendid residence, this liberal, if not splendid fortune, and this

amiable wife?—Surely, if I answer with the least hesitation, you will pronounce the failure to have been the consequence of nothing but some wayward and capricious movement of my own temper.

Listen, however, a little more patiently, ere you altogether condemn me.

My firm expectation, I confess, had been, that my wife, when removed into a sphere of life more diversified with the intercourses of society, and, moreover, necessarily bringing with it the obligation of many in themselves beneficent duties, and lastly, (not in my imagination, certainly, leastly,) enabling me to be much more her companion than my business as a medical man had hitherto permitted me to be,—I expected assuredly, that, placed under these novel and favourable circumstances, Joanne would soon shake off that tinge of religious melancholy which had, ever since the Methodist preacher visited our district, haunted her gentle spirit, and of which I had always supposed the retired, and, indeed, solitary habits of our life of poverty, to have been the chief fostering influence. The ease with which Joanne min-

gled in the society that our new fortunes at first drew around us, persuaded me still farther that this hope would not eventually be disappointed; and I abstained from saying anything on the subject, in the belief that circumstances must always, in such cases, be more powerful agents than words, —above all, than any such words as, I conceived, were likely to come from me, in relation to matters of which I understood but little, and with which I confess myself to have had no sympathy worth the mentioning.

How grievously was I disappointed as to all this!

These people were nothing slower than others in paying court, after their own fashion, to the new Lady of Barrmains. With daily increasing uneasiness, I perceived what progress their most artful of all flatteries was enabling them to make in the establishment of their influence over this not less timid than gentle disposition. But what could I do; unless, indeed, I had resolved at once to commence a totally new system, and introduce regular controversy to my fireside? Was not she the real owner of all this new wealth?

Was not this, in truth, her table, her roof, her everything? How refuse to receive guests whom she chose to welcome; how object to any expenditure in which she chose to indulge? My tongue was fettered as to all this. I sat silent, while men, whose conversation I despised, seemed to consider themselves at home, beneath the roof of one whom they styled their sister. I sat silent, while day after day, and week after week, still brought with it some new manifestation of the same growing mania. I saw my wife's name blazoned, in a hundred tracts and pamphlets, as the patroness of institutions, the professed intention of which neither I nor anybody could deny to be good and fair, while the names of those at the head of them inspired me with perpetual distrust, and aversion, and contempt.

That period was one in which this endemic raged far and near in our county, to an extent of which your own experience can have furnished you with no notion. The eternal visitations of wandering fanatics, some of them men of strong talents, and respectable acquirements, the far greater part ignorant, uninformed, wild, raving

mechanics,—the enormous assemblages of people which the harangues of these persons never failed to command, even in the wildest and most thinly peopled districts of the country,—the scenes of, literally speaking, mere madness, which their enthusiastic and often impious declamations excited, and in which even the most eminent of them condescended to triumph, as the sure tests of the divinity of the peculiar dogmas which they enunciated,—these, and the subscriptions for schools, chapels, and I know not what,—all to be under the control of the apostles of this perilous sect,—all these things spread and flourished in a style of which you can happily form but a slender conception.

Whatever circumstances might have originally favoured the growth of this mania in England, I am sure there were none in Scotland that could be drawn into any semblance of apology or palliative. Our people were then, as they are now, well taught, well disposed, devout by habit, and superintended by a simple, zealous, and most laborious priesthood of their own. Yet men, and churchmen too, were not wanting to lend countenance

and encouragement to these wild itinerants even there; and if I had entered into any serious arguments with my wife, I am ashamed to acknowledge that she might have cited against me names, so universally, and, indeed, so deservedly venerable, that it must have been no easy matter to convince her, no very pleasant matter even to insinuate, that they were all in the wrong.

Almost by way of *dernier resort* I was meditating a journey to Edinburgh, where I hoped crowds, and bustle, and total novelty, might produce some favourable effect in Joanne's mind, when a new field of interest and occupation was suddenly and unexpectedly opened upon myself. In a word, the Marquess of N—— called one day at Barrmains, and, requesting a private conversation, informed me that his second son, Lord James, (the same who was afterwards Admiral,) had just received his appointment to the command of a frigate, which was likely to be kept, for several years to come, on the Spanish Main—that this rendered it desirable for his lordship to vacate his seat in Parliament for the present—and that he, the Marquess, had, upon considering the state of feel-

ing in the country, taken it into his head that I was exactly the man who ought to start for the boroughs. His lordship knew my politics too well to be under any apprehension on that score; and he therefore said, with perfect safety, a great many pretty things, the meaning of which I thoroughly understood, about the perfect independence, &c. &c. &c. with which I should, if successful in the canvass he proposed, come into Parliament.

All this was so new, so totally new, that at first I felt somewhat puzzled; but I was not to give my answer until the next day, and, ere that hour came, I had easily satisfied myself, that a scheme which flattered my vanity, was also, under all the circumstances, the very best and wisest which I could follow. Public business would come to occupy a mind which dreaded stagnation; and I should carry my wife with me to London, which would be fifty times better for the purpose I had had in view, than the now merely nominal capital of Scotland.

Our operations, therefore, (I may say *our*, for they were at least as much Lord N——'s as mine,) were commenced without delay, after the most ap-

proved fashion of all such commencements. That is to say, a clever agent arrived from Edinburgh, and made a tour through the two towns and three villages whose representation was vacant, where he cultivated, very assiduously, Provost, Dean of Guild, Bailie, and Counsellor, preparing the way before the candidate, whose own visitations were shortly to follow. It is not necessary for me to say anything about what the writer did:—my own personal part was an easier, probably, and a more simple one. I gave dinners and dinner-like suppers to the notables of the several places, made speeches that shook the very walls, sung songs that made periwigs fly, and drank anything drinkable, from claret to whisky, until my eyes and nose began to look as if I myself had been for years a leading member of some independent municipal corporation. I played whist with the lady-bailies, and lost every rubber; danced with their daughters, until my wind was half-broken; slobbered the children, squeezed the hands of the chambermaids, and did everything that becomes "a most kind, loving, kissing gentleman," (it is Cowper, I think, that so defines a parliamentary candidate.) I was opposed by an old army contractor, who, upon the peace,

had joined the Opposition; but I soon found that he had no serious intentions of contesting the point with me, being merely employed, according to a good old custom, for the purpose of making *us* feel and express, as we best might, the more gratitude for that support which we should finally experience. In a word, I was at last elected unanimously M.P. for the five eminently respectable royal burghs of Maldoun, (or, according to the more authentic spelling of their charter, Maltdown,) Cannygates, Waimiss, and Wetcraigs, Crossmyloof.

Joanne was, no doubt, flattered with this new elevation: at all events, she, with much good-humour, consented to the ball and supper which I proposed giving at Barrmains to the neighbouring gentry upon the occasion. But even when the *fête* was in its fullest vigour, I had the mortification to see her retire to a corner with two or three elderly ladies, whose private propensities I well knew to be somewhat in harmony with her own; and, when standing near their knot in the pauses of the dance, I could not help hearing quite enough to satisfy me, that chalked floors, chandeliers, minuettes, and country-dances, were all alike the sub-

jects of a sorrowful and *de-haut-en-bas* sort of contemplation.

I looked at the lean and shrivelled old creatures about Joanne, and excused them readily—but she—young, lovely, beautiful, made to live, in the true sense of the word, ("*vivre, c'est sentir la vie,*")—that she should be thus sinking before my eyes into a condition destructive of all sympathy even with *me*—this, I confess, did give me pain. I determined that these particular spinsters at least should not come into contact with her again for some time; and hastened my preparations for the journey to London with all possible zeal.

I should have mentioned that there was another very good reason for my wishing that this journey, since it was to take place, should take place soon. Joanne was now, for the first time, supposed to be in a certain interesting situation; and more especially, considering the natural delicacy of her constitution and health, it was obvious that such a journey would be less advisable when she had made farther progress.

We were just about to take leave of Barrmains, then, without any prospect of returning to

it for a considerable number of months, when I received a letter from my Lord N——, which constrained us in some measure to alter our plans. The Marquess, who was at this time at his hunting-seat in the Highlands, had heard of my intention to move southwards thus early in the season, and he was pleased to write, that he had a particular wish to see me ere I left Scotland.

When I found this to be the case, I had nothing for it but sending Joanne so far as Edinburgh by herself, there to wait until I should join her from the North; for as to carrying her with me, her situation, and the prospect of a very long journey before her at any rate, put this quite out of the question.

Joanne, therefore, set off for Edinburgh, and I proceeded on horseback towards the Peer's forest, travelling in company with a certain old half-pay captain of marines, by name Cuthill, who had also been honoured with an invitation to spend a week there—a neighbour of ours, and an ancient hanger-on of the N—— family.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A RIDE of rather more than a hundred miles brought us to the heart of that wild and magnificent desert, where this great lord's hunting-seat, a new and elegant villa, set down in the midst of Alpine mountains, roaring torrents, and enormous old black pine woods, shewed, I think, as strangely as ever the famous tourist-chapel of Loretto could have done after any of its excursions.

Here Captain Cuthill and I found assembled a large and mirthful party, who had been for some time enjoying the splendours of the chase, in all its varieties, on his Lordship's immense domain. Fops of the first water from Pall Mall were seen seated at table, by the side of specimens of the aboriginal "Barbarous Folk" of the district,

whose attempts towards civilized coxcombry reminded one of a negro in a white neck-cloth. And next day, the same fine gentlemen appeared, by the side of the same mountaineers, under circumstances of awkwardness and absurdity, which, to say the least of it, might well restore the equilibrium between them. Though not only a laird, but a member of Parliament, I, from old habit, still had my cases of instruments and medicines in my saddle-bags; and I promise you the usefulness of these appendages was not very long of being discovered. The Marquess, meanwhile, one of the best shots in Christendom, trotted about the heath as if he had been in a paddock, minding nothing but his sport. Part of that, however, might have consisted in observing the sore scrapes into which some of his guests were always sure to be getting. I, for my part, was quite the Chiron of the set; my presence being as fatal to the bucks of one species, as it was beneficial to those of another.

I was well amused with all this—yet I was anxious to rejoin my wife; and, therefore, rather annoyed to find, that two or three days had passed without his lordship's honouring me with the

conversation which I had been promised. He was so much surrounded with his guests, however, so early astir for the chase in the morning, and so late at his bottle in the evening, that I really could have had no opportunity of introducing the subject with much likelihood of having it satisfactorily discussed. I was awaiting my fate, therefore, with tolerable patience, when, on the third or fourth day, I overheard at his table some conversation between two gentlemen sitting opposite to me, that not a little quickened my desire to do my errand, and be gone.

" And so Lascelyne," said one, " is not to be here after all. Well, I'm sorry to hear it."

" So am I," says the other. " Lascelyne is a princely shot. I would have backed him against the field."

" Nay," was the reply, " Lord Lascelyne is a good shot, I admit; but I should never think of comparing him with the Marquess at this sort of work. He is more your man for the pigeon-box than the moors, in my humble opinion."

" I don't know that," quoth the other; " the same coolness—that, after all, is the chief thing in

both cases. Nothing can be more steady than Lascelyne.—But what's the use of talking, since he's not to come?"

"Hang it!" he answers, "one should have thought he might have been a little calmed by this time of day. I never heard of such an intoxication.—A devilish fine woman, certainly; but still——"

"A taking creature, sir!—a world of fascination, I understand."

"Yes, yes; up to all that, I dare say. Well, he'll be here next autumn at all events."

"Ay, I think we may say so much. Do you mean to look in upon him as you go southwards?"

"I don't know whether he's at home.—Pray, my lord," says this gentleman, turning to the Marquess, "can you tell us where Lord Lascelyne is at present? Some one said, he had left that old chateau of his——"

"I don't know, really," said the Marquess; and, happening to catch his eye at the moment, I could not help thinking that he spoke in a little confusion.

The conversation took another turn; and not

long afterwards we joined the ladies in the drawing-room.

Lord N—— came up to me in the course of the evening, and drew me aside.—"My dear Barr," said he, (for he now generally called me by that name,) "I saw you were rather uneasy when those gentlemen talked of Lascelyne's affair so openly before you; but the truth is, you must just excuse them; they don't know anything of your connection. I'm sure they would have been extremely sorry to say anything they thought could hurt you, Barr."

"Nay, nay," said I, "I beg your lordship's pardon, but I really can't see that any apology of this kind is necessary. Why should I care about hearing Lord Lascelyne's name mentioned more than another's?"

"Come, come, Barr, you're close; and perhaps, under all the circumstances, 'tis the best way."

"Close, my lord! I really don't understand—"

"No matter, no matter, my good friend. I'm sure I feel very sincerely——"

"Good Heavens! your lordship is vastly serious, indeed.—What is all this to me?"

"Nay, nay, if that's the way you are taking the matter, I beg pardon, indeed.—I had heard, to be sure," he added in rather a different tone,—"I had heard of some old law-suit between you."

"A mere folly, my lord marquess,—a thing I have long wished to forget, I assure you."

"But you can't, that's it. Well, well, Barr; we've all of us our points.—I heartily beg pardon for having broached the disagreeable subject at all; but, between ourselves, I was really much taken with Lady Lascelyne, and——But I beg pardon, I see you are resolved,—no matter, no matter."

I must own, I was something disgusted with all this mumbling; so I took the opportunity our retirement happened to have given me of leading the Peer to talk of the business I had come upon, by mentioning how anxious I was to get on to Edinburgh forthwith. He plunged immediately into the theme I had started, and held me in close confabulation for more than an hour, about a bill concerning the Scotch Fisheries, which, it was understood, Ministers meant to bring forward early in the session, and the progress of which he

wished me to watch with all my attention, he himself, as it seemed, not having it in his power to be in London before spring.

As soon as I had made myself master, as I thought, of his lordship's ideas upon this subject, I considered my affairs at the Lodge as for the present brought to a happy termination; and, accordingly, I took my leave of the family the same evening, and began, at a very early hour next morning, my ride towards the low country.

To say truth, I had experienced a world of most disagreeable sensations during the conversation which I have just been recalling. All the faults and follies of my boyhood thus treasured up and dwelt upon, even by people who no one could have supposed would ever have thought it worth while to waste three minutes' consideration on any private affairs of a person so totally out of their sphere. That most painful of all subjects,—that paltry, miserable law-suit to be thus remembered!—and anybody that did remember it to dream of mentioning it,—above all, of mentioning it to me!—And the exquisite disgust of having it supposed, that I, for-

sooth, could not hear Lord Lascelyne's name uttered by a stranger, in a mixed company, without suffering uneasiness sufficient to justify a formal apology from such a person as my Lord N——! The whole of this was gall to me,—and why? Why, simply, because the fact was exactly as these idle meddlers seemed to be supposing. I was conscious in my own heart, that I was not able to hear that name without feelings which I was also perfectly conscious it was the most egregious weakness in me not to have long ago banished from my bosom. I deserved, and, therefore, I felt the reproach. I felt the blood tingle in my cheek as I thought the scene over; and suspected that, after all, I had probably betrayed my emotion by some similar or equally intelligible symptom, at the moment when those coxcombs first began to prate about their bets, and their pigeon-shooting. Lord N—— had seen this. My conduct afterwards must, therefore, have seemed to him disingenuous; both awkward and unmanly!—this was much. In whatever point of view I looked at the whole affair, I found nothing to please, everything to annoy me. Very

deep feeling of any sort perhaps I had not; but I had quite enough to make my morning's ride a disagreeable one, in spite of the finest possible weather, and some of the most celebrated scenery in all the North.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EMERGING, on the second morning, from the gorge of the last pass of the Grampian chain, I perceived, in the valley before me, a small village, with a church spire in the midst of it, surrounded on every side by noble groves, bespeaking the near vicinity of some distinguished residence.

Not having been in this part of the kingdom on any former occasion, I had but a very obscure notion of its geography; and was certainly not less pleased than surprised, when I found, on reaching the public-house, where (having come fifteen miles already) I had intended to breakfast, that the place was St Dee's. You may perhaps remember my having mentioned that name some time ago;—the very parish where my old patroness of St Andrew's had taken up her abode when

she had the honour to become Mrs Mackay. I made my inquiries forthwith; and, having ascertained that the family were at home, sent a message to say, that I would call as soon as I had breakfasted.

The honest Minister, however, was at my elbow in five minutes' space; and, finding that my friend would think herself ill used if I broke bread at St Dee's elsewhere than under her roof, I, of course, transferred myself immediately to the Manse, where, I need not say, I was received in the most cordial manner.

My old flame had thriven apparently upon matrimony, for she was now a very portly dame; and yet four or five blooming and blushing children, with heads like butter-cups, attested sufficiently, that she had not been eating the bread of idleness. In short, I found a comfortable and happy family, established in a small and snug dwelling; and nothing could surpass, in their several species of excellence, the tea, the barley scones, the eggs, the mutton ham, the kippered salmon, and the Athole brose of Biddy. The good people seemed to have been well aware of

the fortunate change which had recently taken place in my worldly circumstances; but, I am sure, if I had come in rags to their door, I had been welcomed every bit as warmly. I heard the whole history of them and their children, and answered a world of the most affectionate inquiries touching my own family affairs.

When we had risen from the table, the Minister threw open a door, which, half way down, bore also the character of a window, and invited us to step upon his terrace. Biddy had her bonnet on her head forthwith, and out we all went. The view was fine in the extreme;—the foreground a beautiful park, diversified with woods and plantations, through which a small stream winded, and, behind, a gentle acclivity, richly cultivated, swelling up to the base of the great hills.

I perceived at some distance from us, among the trees, the turrets and chimneys of what seemed to be a considerable mansion, and asked my worthy friends to whom the domain belonged.

"Bless me!" says Biddy, "is it possible you need to ask such a question? Do ye no ken that that's Lascelyne House?"

"None of the family are at home," says the Minister, very hastily, ekeing out Biddy's information.

A little pause took place; during which, while apparently occupied only with the landscape, I chanced to perceive that the couple were exchanging sundry glances, pregnant with meanings to me mysterious,—and again the same painful sensations which I had so recently experienced at the Marquess's began to be in motion. I was resolved, however, that here at least I should guard myself. So I said, as indifferently as I could, "O yes, I think I heard some one say at Lord N——'s table, that Lord Lascelyne was in Edinburgh.—A very fine place, indeed, it seems to be. Pray, how do you call the stream?"

"'Tis the Calder water," says Biddy; "and a bonny water it is, if ye had time to look at the old Roman bridge, and the tway falls up the glen.—Did you never hear the auld sang, Mr Matthew?—

The birds on the bushes, the flowers thick wi' bees,
Keep the bairns blythe and heartsome at bonny St Dee's;
And the clear Calder water runs gently, gently,
Washing the roots of the old oak trees."

"Well," said I, "I am sorry to say, I must be contented with the bairns' part of your beauties for the present. I must push on immediately to Edinburgh;"—and with this I introduced a full and particular account of my intended journey to London, &c.

"'Tis a right noble place indeed," quoth Mess John, evidently unconscious of the turn I had given the conversation; "and, if all things else had been convenient, you might have seen both the glen and the pictures. There's a very grand collection of pictures in the castle. My lord's grandfather had a great taste, and he spared no expense on a picture——"

"Weel, weel, Dr Mackay," quoth Biddy, interrupting him, "I am sure ye might ken, that after all that's happened, Mr Wald would never like——"

"Me never like?—after all that's happened, Mrs Mackay? Sure you're joking a little,"—said I, forcing a laugh.

"Very weel, very weel," says she smiling, but gravely; "I ken some folk's hearts better than some folk thinks, for a' that."

"My heart?—my dear Miss Paterson—I beg your pardon—my dear Mrs Mackay——"

"Ay, ay, Mr Matthew, ye may laugh as meikle as ye like, but I ken fu' weel that you're no the ane to clean forget auld friends, only for a passing tift or tway.—Yon bonny, sweet, lovely creature!"

"Who, my dear madam, who?"

"O dear! O dear me!—Weel, weel, I'se say naething."

"You've said a vast deal too much already, my dear," half whispers her spouse.

I saw Biddy give him a jog with her arm; and again I forced in the subject of my own travels—prosing away, in a very laudable style, about natural beauties, interesting associations, and all that—but it would not do. A check had taken place; and, though we parted as affectionately as was possible, still I saw that Biddy looked upon me as having behaved with more reserve than was quite proper with so very old a friend. However, my horses being now brought to the door of the Manse, I clapt two of the children on my saddle, and walked them once or twice round the

little court in her presence,—and this piece of attention was not, I thought I could see, without its effect. As for the Minister, I made him promise to come and see me at Barrmairns some time, with his wife, after a General Assembly. And so adieu to this sweet scene of innocent retirement.

I rode rapidly for some time along a road, both sides of which were overshadowed by the trees of Lord Lascelyne's park, catching every now and then a little glimpse of the Mansion, as the different short, straight, dark avenues, cut through the woods, successively opened upon the palisade. I was very well aware, as I have mentioned already, that no one of the family was at home, and yet I know not what feeling of strange undefined anxiety haunted and hurried me. I started like a convict, if a stray stag, or even sheep, happened to emerge from below some of these earth-sweeping branches :—anything moving—anything white, was enough to shake me. I clapt the spurs to my horse, and the road being, as I have said, quite over-arched with the trees, so that scarcely any breath of air could find access to it, it was no wonder that, when—the park being apparently left be-

hind—I slackened my pace, to enjoy the breeze on a free and open piece of rising ground, I found that my horse was already considerably blown. My groom, indeed, seemed to be himself somewhat in the same condition; and I saw that he was rather surprised with my exhibiting so little concern for my cattle, a species of inattention, certainly, with which I was far from being chargeable in general.

However, on we rode, at our moderated pace, until a turning of the road brought us close upon a spot which demanded, not merely a walk, but a halt. In a word, three different roads met very near the extremity of a small, a very small lake, on the further bank of which, but still, as it seemed, quite close to us, (for the water was very narrow,) there appeared some fragments of an ancient Castle, and one or two cottages, propped like bee-hives against the old wall. I began calling out, in hopes of getting some one to direct us as to our road; and presently forth came a countryman, but so deaf, or so stupid, that I was forced to dismount, and ferry myself over to his station, in a sort of punt that was lying in the water.

Upon reaching the other side, I had no diffi-

culty in making myself understood; and having received the information I wanted, was about to return to my horses, when the old cottager asked if I would not like to see the Castle, since I was under its walls, adding, that many people came thither for no other purpose.

"It's name?" said I.

"Lascelyne Castle, to be sure," says he. "This is the true Auld Place; but the family left it after it was burnt down in Queen Mary's days, and built in the haugh yonder."

By this time we had climbed the stair in one of the towers still extant; and coming out upon the battlement, I perceived that I was in reality within the park of Lascelyne house, which appeared below me at much less distance than I should have supposed—a vista among the trees terminating in one of its fronts.

"The Castle," I remarked, "must form a fine feature in the view from those windows."

"Ay, indeed, it does that," says my cicerone; "they come often our length when they are at hame in the summer evenings. My lady was wonderfu' fond of the auld tower."

"Where we are now?"

"Ay, here; we're on the top of the tower, ye see, sir—this is just where they used to come and take their four-hours sometimes, that summer my lord was married—but these days are by now."

The man was silent; and not choosing to put any more leading questions, I stood beside him for a few minutes as silent as he.

"As I shall answer," cries he, "that's the new gig; weel, I had not heard my lord was come hame."

"What! Lord Lascelyne?"

"Ay, just himsell. I ken the way he sits—ay, that's just himsell, and Madam wi' him."

"What? who?—coming this way too?"

Imagine the feelings with which I saw this vehicle drive rapidly up to the walls of the tower—Lascelyne leap from his seat—and handing down a lady.—"They'll come up stairs," said I.

"I'se warrant they're coming up," says the man; "and I maun e'en leave you, sir, for I'll maybe be wanted."

He did leave me. I paused, irresolute; I was considering whether I could not hide myself some-

where amidst the ivy; a thousand schemes and dreams hurried over my brain. I knew not what to do. Behold some one is ascending the stair—I hear once more the broken-winded pant of my cicerone and his heavy tread—Thank heaven! no other step seems to follow.

"Well," said I, when he appeared—"you are soon returned."

"Ay, sir," said he, blowing very shortly; "my lord said he would wait till ye came down. I thought I would tell you that."

I put a trifle into the old lad's hand, and tied my handkerchief high over my chin, as I stalked down the dark and steep ascent.

To my delighted surprise, there was no one at the bottom when I reached it; and I clambered up to a window, on the side next the water, in hopes of escaping, by choosing that egress, all further risk of meeting with Lascelyne, who, I concluded, from what the old man said, had remained within his park. But—that everything might be exactly as was most disagreeable for me—his lordship had walked round the ruin, and was now standing almost immediately below me, by the

brink of the lake, with his back turned, however, upon the window, at the moment when I shewed myself. I say shewed; for although his back was towards me, not so that of his companion. Her eye was full upon me in my awkward position—but that eye was not Katharine's. I had no time to make reflections, and let myself down upon the turf. The lady took a glance or two at me through a glass which she wore suspended around her neck, and turned to Lord Lascelyne, who, however, deigned not to desist from his occupation, which was that of drawing lines on the margin with his walking cane. I hurried to my punt, and shoved off. I was in the middle of the pool ere, throwing a single glance on the shore, I perceived that Lord Lascelyne's eyes were fixed intently upon me. I could not withdraw my glance. We continued eyeing each other, but interchanged no symptoms of recognition. I almost doubted, on reaching the side, whether, after all, he had known me. Many years had passed—my dress was altogether different—nothing could have been farther from his imagination than the possibility of my being *there*. The lady—who could she be? Beautiful she was;

boldness was in that bright eye—some haughty high-born dame—sister, or friend.

I felt as if I had been rubbing shoulders with humiliation. What could Lord Lascelyne think of me, if he really did recognise me?—what meanness in me to be visiting his pleasure-grounds, his castles—throwing myself in his way on his own domain! And Katharine, had she happened to be with him, what must her feelings have been!—how ungentlemanly, how unmanly, my behaviour! If I wished to be once more her kinsman, her friend, why not say so?—why not write to her?—why not ride up to her door like a man?—But here—to skulk about her privacy; to be wandering about her park, studying views and ruins, or gratifying some still baser curiosity! In whatever way I looked back upon the whole affair, I found pain and vexation—an
more miserably, and m
could remember.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOTWITHSTANDING the mental uneasinesses of the day, the body demanded a sound nap, and enjoyed the same for, I take it, not much less than nine uninterrupted hours.

In short, I did not awake until about eight in the morning—nor am I quite sure that I should have been stirring even then, had I been left entirely to nature and myself. At all events, when I had rubbed my eyes, I became aware that some strenuous altercation was going on very near me. It was a mere cottage, in which I had found my *gite* ; and close to the door or the window I heard voices in disputation ; one only of which (and there seemed to be at least three) I recognized—viz. that of my own man, the excellent and faithful Robin Keir :—as thus :

"Wauken, or no wauken, I maun be in—that's the short and the lang o't—Gae away, gae away—let me by."

"The big deil's in the body!—for a' your blawin', ye'se get ne'er a fit."

"Misca'ing the King's officer, ye flunkie?"

"I'm nae flunkie, ye ill-tongued offisher; I'm the laird's ain man, and I'm come o' better folk, too, than e'er birstled their shins at your father's peats. Ye'se get ne'er a fit farther the noo, I say."

"Sile—e—e—ence!!!—George, by the grace of God——"

"We hear ye, body, we're no sae deaf. Ye may keep some o' your breath to cool your porridge——"

"—Of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland——Ki—i—ing!"

"Hullo!—hullo!—Tam!"

"Wheesht, wheesht, Johnnie, man—he's a bailie——"

"Of Great Britain and Ireland—King—greeting——"

"King George greeting!—eh! man, that's but bairnly."

"Dinna read a' that havers, man; just tell us what ye're wanting wi' him."

"That's liker reason, now: Has he seen my lord yet?"

"Seen him? We're just on our gate frae his house yonder."

"They have met, then?"

"Met?—Ay, met and parted baith, to be sure: what are ye at wi' sic daft-like speirings?"

"Eh! where was the meeting, man?"

"We forgathered, the first time, on the moor, just aboon my lord's lodgings."

"On the moors?—and they fired?"

"There was walth o' firing in that moor atweel."

"Winged?"

"Walth o' winging, man."

"Down?"

"Flat down, ye may swear—But what's a' that to you?"

"Several shots?"

"Hundreds o' shots, man."

"Guide us a'! What Heathens!—hundreds o' shots?"

"Pouther's no that dear noo, nor lead neither."

"Dead at last?"

"Dead at the very first, man."

"Dead?"

"Ay, as dead as if ye had thrawn their necks."

"Baith dead?—Ye're speaking nonsense—Barrmains is here, ye said?"

"To be sure he is."

"The body ye mean?"

"Saul and body baith—What are ye speaking about?"

"The duel, to be sure."

"What duel?"

"Between your master and Lord Lascelyne."

"Lord Lascelyne!—I never heard tell o' him afore."

"Why, you've just said ye came from his place."

"Why, dear me! and sae we did; we breakfasted close beside it yesterday morning."

"A fine breakfast!"

"A capital breakfast—the very wale o' breakfasts—at the Minister's——"

"Minister's—nonsense—nonsense—what *are* you speaking about? Are they baith dead, or

baith quick!—speak out at ance—Ye had better. Sile—e—nce!"

"Dead and quick?—wha dead?—wha quick?"

"Did not you say this moment that some one was dead?—Out on you, you're an old donnered——"

"Ca' canny, offisher. What is't you're driving at, wi' a' this hullybaloo?"

"Silence! I ask you, and answer me at your peril, as ye sall answer to the King and the Lord Justice-General, the Lord Justice-Clerk, and the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary——"

"Say awa', man—tak your time."

"Answer me, upon your most imminentest peril—what was the issue of the meeting between your master and the Lord Lascelyne?"

"My master and the Lord Deevil's!—They never met in this world, that I heard tell o'. We only saw the big house through the trees, as we were coming doon."

"Then whom do you mean?—Who shot?—Who fell?—Who was as dead as if his neck had been thrawn?"

"Wha's dead? The muircocks and mawkins

to be sure—and a matter o' tway-three raes every day to the bargain.—Will that content you?"

"Come, come," said I, at this crisis opening my window,—"what's all this bustle, Mr Messenger?"

Robin's hat flew off in a moment; and the fiery-faced minion of Themis, understanding who I was, shewed no want of alacrity in following the courteous example.

With many flourishes after his fashion, this personage at length informed me, that he was the bearer of a warrant of the chief criminal power in Scotland for the instant arrest of my person. You may suppose that this startled me a good deal, though I was not, by this time, without some slight gleam of suspicion as to the general nature of the mistake. I, however, put a good face upon the matter. In short, I laughed very heartily, and desired a sight of his warrant; wherewith, after a little hesitation about trusting the paper out of his hand, he complied.

I retired a pace or two from the window, and read (you may spare me the trouble of describing with what sort of feelings) two formal documents,

engrossed on one folio sheet of paper;—the first a "petition and complaint," from an Advocate-depute to the Judges of the Court of Justiciary, setting forth, that Matthew Wald Barr of Barr-mains, alias Matthew Waldie, had, according to the sworn belief of sundry credible persons, set off for the northern part of this kingdom, with a fixed intention of provoking the Right Honourable George Lord Lascelyne to fight a duel, or to commit some grievous breach of the peace against the person of the said Lord, and to the damage of the King, his Crown, and dignity; likeas, that the said George Lord Lascelyne was art and part in the design to fight the said duel, or otherwise to commit some grievous breach of the peace against the body of the said Matthew, &c. &c. &c.; and praying the Court to grant warrant for the immediate arrest of the said persons, aye and until they should find caution, &c. &c. &c. to the satisfaction of the said Lords, &c. &c. The second effusion was, accordingly, the very warrant thus prayed for; and the Judge who signed it appeared to be no other than my worthy acquaintance, the Lord Thirleton.

Exquisitely ridiculous as the whole affair appeared in one point of view, and bitterly as I was disposed to resent it in another, I still had sense enough to perceive, that no good end could be served by my offering any sort of resistance to authority so formally embodied. Instead, therefore, of entering into any farther discussion with the messenger, I simply told him, that I saw he had done his duty; and that, as I was going to Edinburgh at any rate, it could give me no sort of annoyance to obey the mandate of which he was the bearer.

The man was evidently quite confounded by the calmness with which I had taken the affair, and stammered out a world of such apologies and explanations, as it was more likely his imagination should suggest than my ears should listen to. One *fact*, however, he did communicate; and this was, that although the warrant had been granted at Edinburgh, the Lord Thirleton was probably at Stirling already, or, at least, would be so in the course of the same day, for the purpose of attending the Circuit Court.

"So much the better," said I; "we shall see his lordship thirty miles sooner than we should otherwise have been able to manage."

In a word, I ordered breakfast immediately, and took horse with all gaiety so soon as it was over.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was fine weather when we started; but the day became overcast about noon, and it rained incessantly the greater part of the evening. In short, we had but an uncomfortable ride, and arrived late at night at Stirling, in a very draggle-tailed condition.

My commander led the way to the inn at which the Judges were accustomed to take up their quarters; and I found, from the appearance of matters about the porch-way, that the Court had not as yet broken up for the day. Hungry-looking jurymen were sauntering up and down, and the landlord was fidgetting about, evidently much distressed about the over-roasting of his mutton. This situation of things, however, was in so far

favourable, that it gave me an opportunity of changing my dress; and the messenger having taken his place, with a nipperkin of brandy before him, at the door of the room, I patiently awaited the arrival of the personage whose mandate, I had no doubt, would instantly restore me to my liberty.

Accordingly, in about half an hour, (it was by this time close upon midnight,) my ears were at length gratified with the well-known "Justice-ayre march," performed upon a couple of cracked trumpets in the street below me, and accompanied with a sufficient buzz of "the Lords!!!—the Lords!!!" and, throwing up my window, I could soon distinguish the principal feature of the advancing procession. His Lordship held in his right hand an umbrella, for the protection of his wig and cocked hat; and his left being, with equal propriety, occupied in tucking up the skirts of his robe, his short bandy-legs were seen stumping vigorously through the mud—the bailies and trumpeters in advance, on each side a waiter or two with tallow-candles in paper-lanterns, and the usual rabble in the rear.

My messenger had taken care that our arrival should be announced the moment his Lordship came up stairs; and, in a minute or two, I was summoned to his private apartment, where I found him already stripped of his judicial trappings, and thundering about dinner, with his hands in soap and water. The officer staid without, and Thirleton ordered his servant off also, the instant he perceived me.

"And what's the upshot, doctor? Eh, man, what's come o't?"

"O, my lord, there's been some total mistake. I shan't blame your lordship; but you've been deceived, played upon, altogether."

"Deceived, doctor!—The deil's i' the man! was you no gaun to fight him after all?"

"Nothing farther from my thoughts, Lord Thirleton. I never dreamt of such a thing."

"Ca' canny now, doctor; dinna think to quizzify me, man.—I'se haud ye bound ower in five hundred merks—no a penny less—the law's imperative. I canna help it, if ye were my father."

"You may bind me over in five thousand pounds if you have a mind, my lord. I only wish

to know where all this nonsense has come from.—Who told you all this cock-and-a-bull stuff?"

"Na, since you're laughing, friend, I believe I maun believe ye.—God pity me! what could have put this in the woman's head?"

"The woman, my lord?—what woman?"

"What woman, doctor? Wha but your ain wife, to be sure.—I'm sure of it, had it no been her coming to me hersell, wi' the drap in her een, I'm free to say't, that, gown or no gown, I'm ane of the last that would have liked to interfere in ony sic a job between gentlemen, mair especially when ane o' them was a friend o' mine ain."

"My wife come to you! Good Heavens! what is all this?—I'm made a fool of, my lord—I've been jested with—I'll trace it out somehow."

"Trace it out, man? there'll be nae great wark thereaway.—But you really did not gang north to ca' out Lord Lascelyne? Speak truth now, doctor; nae mair o' your fun."

"Fun? I never was more serious in my life. I have no acquaintance with Lord Lascelyne,—no quarrel with him.—I should as soon have thought of calling out your lordship."

"Hoots, hoots, where *are* we now?—Pity my heart! do you no ken what a' the warld's been ringing about? Do you no ken how he's treated your cousin?"

"My cousin, my lord?—If you mean Lady Lascelyne, I have neither seen her nor heard of her for years."

"O dear, O dear! here's been a braw rumpus about naething.—Od, man, is't possible that ye really have not heard about Lord Lascelyne's parting wi' his wife, and the French madam, and a' thae doings?—Ye've surely been in a dream, or else out o' this warld a'together.—No heard o't?"

"Never, never—not a syllable—at least, not one that I understood."

"Ay, ay," said he, "I begin to hae a glimpse o't now. Folk, kenning the connection, hae been blawin' laigh afore you.—Od, man, but this is wonderful!—And what garr'd ye take that auld firebrand Captain Cuthill wi' you?"

"Me take Captain Cuthill with me! why, I took none of him. He was invited to the Mar-

quis's shooting-party, and we happened to ride together—that's all.—I left him at Lord N——'s."

"Body o' my saul, but that's a story!—Poor lady! Od, man, your poor wife's had a sair time o't, though. We maun send aff an express to her directly."

"Nay, my lord," said I, "that's my work. I shall set off instantly."

"No till ye've ta'en your dinner at ony rate, man.—Ay, and now I think on't, I'll haud you to our bond yet. Od, I'll hae you down for the five hundred merks."

"Five hundred devils!" I cried, losing at length all patience. "Does your lordship really mean to insult me? Have I not told you—do I not tell you now, as I am a man and a gentleman, that the whole of this is nonsense—mere impertinence—balderdash?"

"Hooly, hooly—Ye said ye had heard nothing of his treatment o' the lady; and how do I ken what ye'll be after, now that ye have heard of it? I'll have ye bound—ye needna say a word. Here, Thomas, (ringing the bell,) here, gae away and

bring in the clerk o' court.—Ne'er a foot sall ye stir till it's done, my braw man."

I took this in high dudgeon; but seeing that he was quite beyond my powers of arguing, I submitted to the necessity of the case, went through the required ceremony, and then bowed, retiring.

"Na, na, doctor; noo that we've gotten our turn done, ye must not cast up your nose that gate. Od, man! do you not see yoursell that I could not help it? The deil may care wha kens, I hate these jobs as bitterly as ony poison that ever was brewed—but what could I do? Women greeting, oaths on saul and conscience, a regular petition frae that gomeril of a Depute, (that I should say sae!) that ramstam gomeril.—If I had been in *his* place, I can tell you I would have seen them far eneugh or I would have—But what signifies speaking, man? it's a' settled now—send ye aff your man to Edinburgh, and stay to your supper wi' the Court. Bless your heart, man, ye little ken me. Did I no pick out the very drunkenest messenger we have? Sure, I thought Davie Macalister would have taigled at every public, and never gotten to the Highlands until ye had a' time to be in

France, if ye liket. Come, come, it's no wi' my will that I meddle wi' gentlemen on these occasions. Troth, man, I wadna be blate if it were sae. I've maybe dune as ill a deed mysell or now, in the days o' my youth—And, after all, is not she your near kinswoman? And what was the mighty marvel, if folk did think that ye would like to see what his skin was made of? Ye've your ain reasons, nae doubt; but faith, man, I'se make nae round-abouts wi' you; I think if I had been as sib to her as you are, I might have been drawn on to take some notice of such behaviour mysell.—Here, rax me the ink-stand; stay a moment—I'll write just a line."

I stood by him while he scribbled a note. He rung his bell again, and said, ere I could interfere to prevent him—"Here, man and horse directly, and let that be in Edinburgh ere we're six hours aulder."

The servant vanished, and he turned to me again. "Come away to your dinner now; your horse is forjaskit at any rate, and sae's yoursell. He'll be in Edinburgh lang ere you could be—Come away to your dinner—I hear the trumpets."

To say truth, I felt so much annoyed and perplexed, that, upon a very little reflection, I was easily satisfied it was quite as well to take matters leisurely. My wife's behaviour was still inexplicable—the story of my cousin was still a mystery—a thousand agitating thoughts were about me. I said to myself, I shall at least go coolly to the unravelling of this knot.

I obeyed, therefore, the commands of my Lord Thirleton, and proceeded in his train to the scene of action. A large party of magistrates, jurymen, advocates, solicitors, all the hangers-on of a Scots Circuit Court, dined (or supped) together at a long table; the Judge at the head thereof, and the Clerk officiating as croupier. An imposing scene, certainly, if it still linger in all its honours. The two cracked trumpets brayed forth the triumph of every pledge; and the most fearful culprit, who was to grace the next day's bar, might at least have consoled himself with the assurance that he could not sleep less that night than those who were to try him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HAVING no concern with the judicial business, I took my sleep out; and it was late in the day ere I drew my bridle at the mouth of Lady Stair's close, where Joanne had taken up her abode, in a lodging-house, kept, as I afterwards discovered, by a leading member of the Society for the Conversion of the Chinese. However much I had been annoyed with the absurd incident of yesterday, you may believe that nothing could be farther from my thoughts than seriously to blame my poor wife for the part she had acted. She burst into tears on seeing me, and clung round my neck with infinite passion. It was some time ere I could get her calmed sufficiently to answer in an intelligible manner the questions I naturally proposed, touching the mistake into

which she had fallen, and the circumstances which had given rise to it.

"Oh, Matthew," sobbed she, "what could I do? Mrs Mather told me she was sure it was so; and the Principal too, the good worthy Principal, he said he knew your temper, and that nothing would restrain you."

"Mather! Good heavens! Joanne, where, how have you fallen in with these people? You know how I abominate them?"

"Oh, now, Matthew, don't speak that way: I'm sure you have not a better friend in this world.—I met them both at Lady Carjarg's; and when they knew who I was, I'm sure they spoke as kindly of you, as if you had been their own child. He's an eminent man, the Principal. O dear! to think of remembering old trifles of that sort, and especially now, when they are in this sore affliction—this grievous distress indeed—and young Mr Mather too, and the girl—oh, you have no notion what a state the whole family are in."

"The family!—the Farrow!—Don't breathe that name again, Joanne, if you love me."

"Oh, Matthew, this is a very unchristian tem-

per. Do, my dearest, do but consider how many suns you have let go down upon this wrath."

"Come, come, Joanne, you have not eat a bushel of salt with these gentry yet; I beg you will not mention them. I hate them—is not that enough?"

"Hate? O, what a word is that! But surely you don't hate your poor cousin too, that they all told me you were so fond of, when you were children about the house together. Poor woman! I'm sure you'll at least pity her. I never saw her, you know, but once, and that's a long time ago now; but from anything I recollect, I'm sure she is not a creature to be hated.—How black you look, Matthew!—O! your look distresses—it frightens me to see you. Oh, my dear Matthew, you must strive with this violent temper of yours. My dear, dear Matthew!"—and so she burst into tears again.

"I wish, my love," said I, when she had recovered herself again—"I wish, my dear girl, you would tell me plainly what all this story is. That old crafty lawyer told nothing that was intelligible. Lord Lascelyne and his wife have parted? How? when? why? Tell me the story as it is."

"He has treated her like a beast these two years, Matthew; but although everybody else suspected something of it, she never said a word to any of her own people—She never gave the least hint of it to poor Mrs Mather."

"Mather again!—for God's sake, Joanne—"

"Oh, don't speak such words, Matthew!—But she bore it all in quietness, you see, till at last he went the length of bringing that woman home to the house."

"Woman! what woman?"

"That bad bad Frenchwoman, Matthew; a player, an opera-dancer, with a husband of her own too, they say. He brought her to the very house, and made her sit down at his wife's table."

"And she left the brute?"

"Ay, brute indeed. She went off directly; that is, in the middle of that very night—she and her child."

"And whither? Where is Katharine?"

"That no one can tell. She has not been heard of yet. Nobody knows anything; but most people think she has gone abroad. As for the poor Mathers——"

"Once more, never say that word again, Joanne.—Katharine has really disappeared?"

"Totally—totally. Lord Lascelyne has sent in every direction, for he was mad at the boy being taken away—but all in vain. Her mother too—but no trace—none whatever."

"Poor Katharine!"

"Ah! that's my own Matthew! I knew you would feel for your cousin. I knew you could not have the heart to dislike her."

"Dislike her! O Joanne, little do you know me!"

"I do know you, Matthew; I know you better than you do yourself. I always said that I was sure you would feel this most deeply; and indeed, you know, if it had not been for that, they could never have persuaded me to go to Lord Thirleton's."

"Ay, ay—I see how it all is now, Joanne. But stay, are all your things ready? Shall we set off in the morning?"

"To-morrow morning?"

"Yes, why not to-morrow? What have we to do here?"

"There's the annual Anti-popery sermon to-morrow in Lady Yester's. I would fain stay one day, Matthew, if you please. I have never heard the Principal."

"Eternally confound the canting scoundrel!—Come, Joanne, give directions to your maid, and I'll order the carriage. I can't bear to stay here, after all that has happened. That rascal—rascal—Lascelyne!"

"O my dear Matthew! let's go by all means; don't frighten me with those looks of yours—remember who says 'Vengeance is mine.' You must not—you will not—O Matthew! consider that you are not alone in this world."

"My dear girl," said I, taking her in my arms, "I was not even thinking of what you imagine. Let us go to London, though; I can't bear to be stared at here."

"My dearest Matthew, I am your wife, your own wife—I will do anything you please.—Let us go, since you say so."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I HAD never been in London before: so I need not tell you how my first two or three weeks were spent I made my wife see as many of the sights as her health could justify, or my persuasion accomplish; and, after changing our quarters three or four times, from a hotel to a lodging-house, back to the hotel again, and so forth, we at last settled down into the quiet tenants of a smallish but very comfortable house of our own—not the house in which you have so often visited me, but in the same street, though of rather a more elegant character.

Here we awaited the meeting of Parliament in rather a humdrum style of existence; for I had almost no acquaintances, and my wife's world-spurning mood was, as you may probably have suspected long ere you reach this page, too deep-

ly seated for any exertions that I could bend to its eradication. When Parliament met, I, of course, became involved in a world of purely masculine employments. I was introduced to ministers and men in office; I was admitted into clubs; I sat on committees in the morning, and heard debates in the evening: I was visited by Scotch aspirants, of every shade of the disgusting. Dinners, disputes, Pitt, America, Franklin,—all the bustle of the day and the hour rung in my ears. My poor wife heard as many sermons, and gave as many tea-drinkings, as she had a mind. I really began to fancy myself quite a public character.

The grandest epoch, however, was that when the Honourable Member for Maldoun made his maiden speech. This occurred when the before-mentioned Fishery bill was brought forward. I had lived for several years near the coast, I had property on it, had made myself master of the subject, and I really did deliver a very fair speech,—A business-like sensible statement of facts, unhackneyed arguments, briefly and unflourishingly produced; —such were my materials,—and the outlandish utterance, I believe, did more good than harm;

for its novel barbarity excited good humour at the opening of the affair, and that is generally, in such cases, more than half the battle. In short, I did make a very respectable appearance, (for a Scotch Member,) and we carried our bill by a triumphant majority.

It would have been as well, in every point of view, if I had continued Single-speech Wald; but this was not the case. On the contrary, sir, I was so much gratified with my success on that great occasion, that nothing, forsooth, would please me, but I must say a few words when, in about a fortnight after, a question of quite another description,—a public, political, national question,—a question about America and England,—came on the carpet. Total failure was the consequence; the House had no notion of listening to my Sawney brogue in relation to a theme of this sort. In short, I felt, ere I had been on my legs three minutes, that every one considered my uprising as a piece of arrant presumption. I caught glimpses of sarcastic eyes twinkling upon me from every corner, and the solemn, fixed attention of the Speaker struck me all of a sudden as mere mockery. I

perceived I was quizzed; I heard feet shuffling—noses blowing—hems—coughs—snuffing—sneezing. In a word, I understood my situation; and, rousing myself to the utmost, thundered out one great, long, unmeaning lump of a sentence, with the confidence of a kettle-drum; and then, with a ton, at least, of bile in full ferment within me, I floundered myself down into my seat.

No notice of anything I had uttered was taken by the two speakers who followed; and, indeed, this was not very wonderful, since of what I had meant to say beforehand, I, upon reflection, was quite sensible that I had in reality brought forth scarcely a fragment. The third in hand, however, being a professed joker of the House, a very fine, polished, courtly punster, thought fit not only to advert to something of my attempt towards argument, but, in doing so, to make some sly allusions to my *quondam* profession; and, moreover, to mimic one or two of the tones of my voice, and not a few of my improvements on the pronunciation of the English tongue, in a way that produced an universal titter, which again terminated in something very like a horse-laugh. I sat boiling—every eye upon me—until he had finished his oration;

and then, starting up, rattled forth, to the total astoundment of every one who had the least knowledge of what is usual there, a coarse, blunt strain of angry invective, in which (for my sins) were interwoven certain most unparliamentary flowers of rhetoric, such as *stuff*, *impertinence*, *Saddler's-Wells' wit*, and I know not what atrocities besides. A prodigious fuss of *order! order!* followed—worlds of appeals to the chair—all manner of solemn cant; and, after fuming for a quarter of an hour, "the gentlemen mutually explained,"—"Mr Speaker took the honourable members' word, that this affair should go no farther," &c. &c. &c. as is the established and venerable etiquette of St Stephen's, whenever TRUTH [as between man and man] is so forgetful of propriety as to come forth in her own naked unloveliness.

It so happened, that a certain old, officious numskull, by name, The Right Honourable Sir Jonathan Le Grand, of Bulmerhampsleigh Priory, in the county of Nottingham, Baronet, thought himself entitled to come forward upon this occasion as the "mutual friend," forsooth, of the two honourable members who had officiated as the heroes of

this "highly unpleasant little *fracas*." This jack-ass was seen fidgetting about from bench to bench during the rest of the debate; and, when the House broke up, behold I found that a party had been made up to sup the same evening in Spring-Gardens, for the express purpose of bringing Messrs Wald Barr and Skippington together over a bottle of champagne, that no remains of any thing like mis-understanding might linger in the minds of two gentlemen, who, if they but knew each other's real merits, could not fail to be on the best possible footing!—Mr Skippington having agreed, I, sensible that, if he had been first, I had been most, in the wrong, did not well know how to refuse;—and to the tavern in question we, about eight or nine in number, some Whigs, some Tories, did accordingly and forthwith adjourn.

The supper went off very pleasantly; and, the bottle circulating with great rapidity, all were soon in prodigious spirits, my witty antagonist included. He was the soul of the festivity; he sung delightfully, and told Joe Millers to admiration. In a word, even my sulky temper was smoothing itself before the fascination, when the same wor-

thy who had originally projected this festivity of conciliation, being now in a state of the most egregious hilarity, took it into his head to call upon Mr Skippington for a specimen of one talent, one extraordinary talent, with which the company had not yet been favoured. This request was, after the usual allowance of entreaty, complied with; and I soon perceived that the witty creature was pouring forth an extemporary ditty, each several stanza of which was devoted to some particular member of the company round the table—a piece of the merest buffoonery, though, I admit, not executed without a very considerable display of a certain sort of cleverness. The wine had so completely done its duty, that when he came to me, (for he went round the table quite regularly,) behold once more an exquisite mimicking of the Scotch doctor!—I could not stand it:—it was the affair of half a moment:—my glass flew at his head, and missed the mark by a hair's breadth.

You may picture for yourself the hubbub—and you may also figure the solemn pause of dead, universal silence which followed that.

In three minutes four of the party were enclosed

within an adjoining apartment, and Skippington and I lunging at each other by the light of two pairs of candles.

I was quite cool, sensible to the very core of my absurd misbehaviour; he, on the other hand, was as hot as Lucifer—and with some reason, indeed, might he be so. Three or four passes were interchanged: I received his point in the flesh of my sword-arm; and was never more happy than when this afforded me the opportunity of making a very handsome apology.

In a word, it had been fated that I should be the doctor that night. I fastened my bandage *secundum artem*, and was conveyed home in considerable pain and shame, and, in spite of champagne, I assure you, in the most perfect sobriety.

CHAPTER XXIX.

My wound, though at first of little apparent importance, proved troublesome, in consequence, perhaps, of the irritable and feverish condition of my feelings when I received it; and, even after it was healed up, the deep disgust I had conceived for St Stephen's Chapel, or (which was the same thing) my own unfortunate exhibition there, left me little disposition to go abroad. My wife, too, who had, I need scarcely say, been terribly shocked with what had happened, was now in a very feeble state both of mind and body, and demanded all my attention. In a word, I became a recluse in the midst of the great city; and, of course, nobody took the trouble to notice it. I seldom quitted my house at all until dusk, and then used to walk up and down the streets with as perfect a feeling of solitude, as

if the crowds of people, passing and repassing me, had been the trees of some central forest, or waves roaring below me upon some untrodden beach.

During my recovery, Joanne used often to entertain me with the curiosity which some servants' stories had excited in her provincial mind in regard to the house next to ours, and the strange behaviour of its unknown inhabitants. The windows in front of this house, she said, had never once been opened since we came to reside there, nor, so far as she could hear, for some time before. To the street it had all the appearance of total desertion. No person ever knocked at the door,—no carriage ever stopped there; the window-shutters were always barred, and the glasses as dim and dusty as if the air had not reached them for years and years. Yet the house *was* inhabited. A little dog had been heard barking through the partition-wall: this was the first hint of their being anybody within. But, afterwards, a young woman-servant had been seen in the little garden behind, apparently returning to the house in that way from the Mews-lane. More lately, a beautiful child, evidently a gentleman's child, had been seen

playing once or twice in the same little garden—but quite alone. Still the same desolation reigned all over the external appearance of the house.

The servants had, of course, framed many more or less satisfactory solutions of all this mystery. One repeated strange stories of forgers and coiners, and shrewdly suspected, that some dark traffic of that kind was carried on in this light-eschewing family. Another told of villains who make a trade of inveigling persons into some quiet corner, where all means of detection are absent, and there murdering and burying them, for their money, or for revenge. A third added to this, that a dead body, with visible signs of strangulation about the neck, had not long before been found floating in the river; and a fourth had often heard that murdered men were occasionally tumbled into some of the great sewers, and so conveyed into the Thames in a fashion that set all inquiry at defiance.

The boy, meantime, had not appeared for some days past;—and Joanne had listened to the maids' commentaries on this, until she had almost persuaded herself that some deadly harm had come over the little innocent. I laughed at all this; observing,

that it was most probably some poor devil sheltering himself from his creditors: but, at the same time, my curiosity was a little touched—and, after I had begun to stroll about in the evenings, I certainly did often stop to contemplate the mysterious abode, the condition of which I found to have been described to me without any exaggeration.

I also, happening to have my own private parlour to the back of the house, used often to cast my eyes upon the garden,—but without seeing either the child or the woman-servant I had been told of. It was now fine spring weather, moreover, and yet this garden remained without any semblance of attention being paid to it. Every other garden about had been newly trimmed for the season, and ours among the rest; but there, all was desolate, just as the winter had left it.

At last, one afternoon, as I was alone in my apartment, accident (for I had really begun to desist from thinking of these matters) drew me to the window, and behold, there *was* a child in the garden. The wall between was not low, but I could see him distinctly—a very fine-looking little fellow, dragging a child's cart and horses

through the long ragged grass of the neglected plot. I perceived that he looked up towards the windows of the house now and then, and smiled as if somebody was attending to his motions; but, although I would fain have thrown up my own window, I was sensible that this could not be done without some noise, and, therefore, contented myself with keeping my eye on the boy until he left the garden;—which he did not long afterwards.

This stimulated anew a curiosity, which certainly could not lay claim to any very dignified character; but I was idle, and fanciful at any rate,—and, thenceforth, I never allowed my window-sash to be down in the day-time, thinking that the next time the little gentleman made his appearance, I should be able, if there were nothing before me but my Venetian blind, to obtain, perhaps, some glimpse of the person, who, as I thought, had been watching him from within the house while he was at his sport; and thus, in short, to penetrate something of the mystery which had so long been perplexing us all.

I adhered to this new device for a week or two, but finding nothing to result from it, and even the

little boy not appearing again, had begun to depart from it.

I was sitting, however, by myself one night, reading my book, when, happening to feel my room overheated, I threw open the window, and was detained leaning over it by the extreme beauty and serenity of the moonlight. Suddenly my ear caught sounds—sounds of grief apparently—and, watching for a moment, I became satisfied that they proceeded from the neighbouring house. However I had smiled at the servants' dark conjectures and tales, I confess that this lamentation, the first sound of human voice that I had ever heard proceed from this mysterious quarter—I confess that the groans I heard, together with the lateness of the hour, and the profound death-like silence which reigned over everything besides —I confess that all this moved in me, not a feeling of simple curiosity merely, but a crowd of feelings which I could not analyse on the instant, nor shall I be idle enough to attempt describing them now. Let it suffice, that I obeyed the impulse of the moment. I fastened a cord to the little iron balcony of my window, dropt upon

the turf below, and having often before noticed that a certain horse-chesnut tree in my garden threw some of its branches partly over the wall which separated it from the adjoining one—to this tree I walked, and fairly began to climb it.

I soon was higher, much higher than my wall. I found out the projecting branch which seemed to be most capable of sustaining my weight, and crept along it. I could now see that there was light in a window—the same window towards which the boy had seemed to cast his eyes when he played on the green. Could I get a yard or two further, I might probably see something of what was going on within that room. The sounds came upon my ear, every moment more clearly, more distinctly. Heavens! a woman's voice!—what ruffian deeds may be doing in this guarded lair of guilt! Why did I not bring my sword with me? I could go back for that—in the meantime, let me see if possible what is the fact. I huddled myself a pace or two farther on—A woman—a lady —a lady alone—I just caught one glimpse of this, when snap went the branch under me. I heard the crash in its progress, but it was too late—I

fell, and I fell about as senseless as the timber I had broken.

This was for a moment—no more. I gathered myself up instantly—at least so it seemed to me; and behold, what is here—a man, an oldish man bending over me, scanning my features by the light of his lamp. "As I live, Mr Matthew!—Oh, my lady, 'tis Mr Matthew, our own Mr Wald, my lady!"

I sprung to my feet. Before me, right before me, three paces off, no more—"Is this under the cope of heaven?—do I dream?—am I mad?—am I dead and buried, and among the beings of eternity?—Katharine, Katharine Wald! do I indeed see thee? Is this life or vision? Behold me once more at thy feet! Katharine! angel! victim! martyred loveliness! Speak—speak—forgiveness!"

She gazed, she extended her arms, she dropt—but not upon the ground—I received her; I lifted her, faint, speechless, shivering, sobbing. I lifted her in my arms; I could have borne her to the end of earth, although I had been pierced with fifty daggers. I bore her into the house—I follow-

ed, and the man led me—I placed her where he pointed. She lay with her long dishevelled curls upon my bosom. The man, with instinctive reverence, withdrew.—We were alone; no, not quite alone. Her child was asleep, smiling close beside us in the serenity of happy dreams. I gazed upon the infant. She looked upon him too, and she sunk again upon my breast in a passion of lamentation.

How mechanically these old wrinkled fingers do their work! Is it thus that I live over again those moments? Alas! when was that day that I did not live them?

What humiliation on both sides!—and yet what was mine? What signified it to me to say out that which had for years curdled at the roots of my heart?—I had suffered vanity and sinful revenge to lead astray a mind irritated by imaginary wrongs—wrongs at least shapeless, nameless, incapable of being clothed in *words*. I had suffered for this? Perhaps so—perhaps not. The external tenor of my life at least had been fortunate, eminently fortunate. Had I not a wife of my own choice—an estate—a station equal at least to my earliest hopes? But her story—how different was

this! For any woman to tell the cruelty of her husband is enough, but for Katharine Wald to tell her husband's cruelty to me—to me that had hated him, and shewn my hatred from the first moment our eyes met—to me that had never spoken to her since she was his wife—that had acted acts of hostility, ay, and worse, of contempt—to me that had ceased to be *her* kinsman from the hour in which I saw *him*—this was bitterness indeed!

And would she have breathed anything of all this to *me* even now, unless I had forced her to do so by a violent intrusion upon her privacy, and afterwards by all the frenzy of a murderous sympathy? I cannot answer this, sir, but so it was, that everything gave way before the torrent of our mingled anguish. I cursed, madman that I was, I cursed the hour in which she saw him! I cursed him like a fiend. I described the French madam that I had seen with him in his ruin—in her favourite haunt—and grinding my teeth, in an agony that forgot all the world beyond the one spot where she was seated, I, like a savage and a ruffian, clutching at the heartstrings of a prostrate

victim, demanded, ay, and wrung from her, the confession that *once* she had been mine.

Such confessions are not made in words—I have no words to repeat. The thing was so. Perdition on my baseness! I twisted this dagger in that heart in the presence of Lascelyne's child—ay, and in another's presence too!

My poor wife had left her bed, thinking I was sitting up too late, and came into my room (this, indeed, was no very unusual occurrence) to tell me what the hour was. But I need not be particular; you may easily imagine what her feelings were, when she found the window open and the cord. The servants being alarmed instantly, they discovered one of my slippers on the green, close under the horse-chesnut. A ladder was brought, and one of the first of them that passed the wall was my poor Joanne, made strong and bold both, in spite of her nature and her condition, by the fears, the wild fears which agitated her for *me*.

Katharine was weeping on my bosom, and I took no note of the outcry and bustle—nor did she. Suddenly a piercing cry was uttered quite close to us. Joanne was within the chamber-door.

She had seen with her eyes the agony of that tenderness, and she saw no more.

One convulsion chased another over her delicate frame. Wild reproaches, melancholy wailings there were; but they were all sunk immediately in the screams of her untimely travail.

Horrible hour! I stood in the presence of Katharine a husband, a parent—a widowed husband and a childless father! I stood it all, however. Yes, my soul was chained up within me;—I could contemplate all this havoc—understand it I could not.

I found myself—how long after I know not—in my own house—in my own bed. The same dull leaden stupor still sat upon my brain—the same dead crust of despair dry upon my heart.

CHAPTER XXX.

In this lost condition of tearless despair I remained for three days, contemplating with as much indifference of disgust as if they had been worms, the servants and doctors that occasionally crept about my darkened chamber before me. I drank as much water in this time as would have drowned me, but broke no bread—absolutely none.

That night, still lying on my bed, I heard a sort of bustling of feet, and a suppressed whispering going on in the staircase with which my room communicated, and a sudden suspicion rushed into my mind, which as suddenly made me rise from my bed. I slipped on my dressing-gown, and opening the door, perceived the end of the pall, which two or three men, treading on their stocking soles, were carrying into the next apartment. I followed

them, and startled by my appearance the whole array of women-servants who were there busied in their preparations. I ordered them all to leave the room instantly. The men set down their burden, and obeyed, all but one, who stopped for a moment to turn to the women and say that he was the person who was to fasten the screws, and that they would call him up again when he was wanted. He then laid down his hammers and chisels, and followed the others, still stalking upon the points of his toes, as if the dead were to hear, or the living notice his tread. I said to the females when he had disappeared, "Leave me, all of you, and tell those men too that they have nothing more to do here at present.—Leave me."

I suppose I spoke in such a manner as to frighten the poor creatures. They all stole away immediately without saying a word—they scarcely even dared to glance at me as they passed me, for I was standing close by the door.

I was alone with my dead—and who the slayer?

"Murdered innocents! no hand but mine shall touch your remains;"—such was my thought as I approached the bed on which they were both

lying—the infant beside its mother. I lifted the cloth from Joanne's face. Ah! how calm, how celestially calm!—what a holy tranquillity!—A smile—yes, a smile was fixed on the lips; those soft, silken eye-lashes, in what serenity did they sleep upon the marble!—Poor little floweret! thy leaves were scarcely opened; what a light dream must this world be to thee!—I lifted my wife in my arms; the cold ice crept through every fibre of my frame.—Gentle soul! what a warm and humble heart has been frozen here!—I laid her in the coffin, and then brought her baby and placed it on her breast,—fastening one of the bands round them, so that the position might not be disturbed. I kissed them both, and covered them up for ever!—I had seen too much of death not to be well acquainted with my duty. I did everything that is commonly done. I shook in the saw-dust; I scattered the perfumes; I drew the napkin over the cold, sweet faces.—"Farewell, farewell for ever!" said I. "At least, Joanne, no other wife shall ever lie upon the bosom that I *said* was yours! No other baby but yours shall ever claim the last office from these hands!"

I lifted the lid, and laid it in its place, and screwed down the nails. The bodily exertion, perhaps, had roused me too much; or it might be, that I was more softened while they still seemed to be with me. I cannot tell; but I know that I spent the whole night in striding up and down the room beside them, and that when the entering day-light dimmed the lamp, I was still equally without the resolution to go, or the tenderness to weep..

CHAPTER XXXI.

I WAS stalking about, then, in the same dull half frenzy, when some one knocked at the door. Taking it for granted it was some of the servants, I answered in a voice of rage, "Begone!"—but the knock was repeated. I rushed to the door and opened it, (for it was both locked and barred within,) and there was Katharine!——She was dressed as if for going out, and her boy was in her hand.

"Come in, Katharine," said I; "I did not dream that it was you.—Come in."

She entered, still leading the child with her.—I gazed upon her with a sort of awe; and even dread; her cheek was so pale, so bloodless,—her lips so white and bleached,—her eyes so fixed in the gloomy stedfastness of utter desolation.

"Our meeting, Matthew," she said, "has been a sore one; we must now part. I have come to bid you farewell—I, and my boy."

"What! all leave me, Katharine?—Look there,—do you see what partings I have had already?—You too!—Alas! why?—whither?—Are you not still my sister? Is not our blood the same?"

"I must go, Matthew; my retreat has been discovered. I knew from the first moment it must be so. How could that be kept secret that was known to so many,—and under such circumstances, too?"

"Stop, Katharine, stop!" I cried; "let me bury my dead, and I will go with you wherever you will lead me.—Alas! what matters place to me now?—Do you not see that I am alone in this world?—No, no; not alone neither;—not quite alone, while I have you to weep with me.—Oh! would that I could weep!—While I have still an arm to defend you,—blood, floods and floods of blood, to flow for you!—Do you not see that Providence has given me to you for your protector?—What fear you from man?—Why fly?—from whom?—What is it that you fear?—Here, any-

where, 'tis all one,—sit down here,—sit down beside this black casket of my jewels.—Here let us rest together: what need we care for this world now?"

I had forced her to sit down, but she rose the moment I unclasped her hand.

"Nay, Matthew," said she, still fixing her large glazed eyes upon me,—"Nay, Matthew, this is not the way in which we must take what God sends. Remember yourself, I pray you. Be once more a man and a Christian. I, too, have had my sorrows, and I partake yours; but we must not be thus."

"Not thus? God pity me! how can we be?—Can you raze out years and years? Can you recal the days that are gone? Can you blot out the tears that have flowed? Can you smooth the heart that is seared and scarred all over? Can you soften stone into flesh again? Can you breathe life into the dead?"

"No, no, no, Matthew—you rave, you are mad—you frighten me—even me. Alas! how can I leave you thus—and yet how can I stay?"

"Where is this fiend, this beautiful fiend of

yours, that torments you, and never will let you rest? Where is this persecuting fiend?"—

"Matthew Wald!"—

"Where is your husband, your lord, your Lascelyne?"

"Here—here in London—he has been here for several weeks—and now I know that he has traced *you*—and me too, he must have traced me too; he must have heard all this dark woeful story —he will be seeking me anon."

"Seek you! I think I may seek him as soon— What is it that he wants? Is he not contented yet?"

"My boy, my boy, my only boy, Matthew— he will not leave me even my boy—and the law is on his side—he will tear my child from my breast."

"Demon—devil—he shall tear my heart out of its socket first—Stay here—this arm is the law— Have I not my father's sword yet? Ah! Katharine, would not the old man smile——"

"Matthew Wald—You must not speak so of the father of my child—be calm—be yourself— and I will listen to you."

"I am calm as these," said I, laying my hand on the bier beside us—"forgive me my wild words—but do not leave me—stay here—under this roof at least, there is no one can touch you—Stay here, my pretty boy," said I, "these ringlets are for a mother's fingers yet—no step-dame—no dancing adultress shall pollute these glossy curls with her envious touch—come hither, boy,—you have your mother's eyes at least."

I caught up the little fellow, and while I kissed his fair brow he began smiling and playing with the silken cords, and tinsel ornaments. I saw Katharine's eye swim—and mine too found water at last.

We were sitting by them in this way—I for the first time really melted even to the brink of soothing, when a servant tapped at the door of the room, and I was no longer in a humour to be rude with anything.—I rose and opened the door immediately. He put a letter into my hand, and told me the person who had brought it insisted upon staying below for an answer.

"I can't be answering letters now, Robert—tell him I shall attend to it to-morrow."

The man made a sign to me to step without the door—his looks had something so significant that I obeyed it—"My dear master," said he, "I thought it best to tell you at once. The constables have been at the next door this half hour, and they have at last got into the house and searched it, and I believe this letter is from Lord Lascelyne himself—I think I know the livery; but the man would not say anything."

I stepped into the room again for an instant—told Katharine that I had a little business, but would be with her immediately—and then I read as follows:—

"Sir,

"Nothing could have been farther from my wishes than any altercation, in any shape, with you: above all, in regard to any subject in which Lady Lascelyne is concerned. Your own conduct has, however, compelled me to act as I am now doing.

"I do not feel myself called upon to enter into any explanation of any part of my own conduct, to

one who possesses no title to demand such. I limit myself to the simple facts of the case.

"Your visit to Lascelyne Castle appeared strange to me at the moment; but I soon was put in possession of the clue necessary for sufficiently explaining that mysterious procedure, though I confess something connected with the history of that warrant is still rather obscure.

"The total ignorance, however, which you, on every occasion, professed of Lady Lascelyne's movements, for some time satisfied me that you had originally acted in this matter without any communication with her ladyship.

"How far and how long I was right in affixing this interpretation to the language which reached me from various quarters of unquestionable authority, I must now decline expressing any opinion.

"It is sufficient that I have at last succeeded in tracing Lady Lascelyne to the retreat, where, in your immediate neighbourhood, and apparently in pretty close intercourse with your establishment, she has so long baffled my inquiries.

"I am perfectly aware where Lady Lascelyne at this moment is; and I take this method of con-

veying to her the intimation, that, if she supposes herself to have been, or to be, in any way, the primary or the proper subject of my inquiries, no idea can be more perfectly mistaken.

"Her ladyship may set her mind completely at rest on this head. I have not the remotest inclination to disturb her in the enjoyment of that protection which she has been fortunate enough to secure for herself.

"But I am not ambitious that my son should continue to form a part of the same circle.

"My legal title to the possession of my son's person was always indisputable; and I can scarcely imagine that even Lady Lascelyne could have found an adviser to sanction any doubt she might possibly, in the first instance, have entertained as to this.

"But let that be as it may, I have now simply to inform you, sir, that I am in possession of the proper warrant; and to suggest that the immediate surrender of my boy's person may be, under all the circumstances of the case, not only the most proper, but also the most prudent, method of terminating this branch of the affair—a branch

of it in which I cannot conclude without saying, that I am not a little puzzled to account for your interference.

"The bearer will convey to me immediately your answer: and I trust it will be such as to preclude the necessity of my making any farther use (which, however, I am instantly prepared to do) of the legal authority now in my hands.

I have the honour to be
Your most obedient humble servant,
&c. &c. &c.,
WALD LASCELYNE.

Thursday morning, 6 *o'clock*."

"*Wald* Lascelyne!—This is well!—'Here's much, Orlando!'"

I dressed myself, (for as yet I had but half my clothes on,) and, going down stairs on tiptoe, desired to see the messenger.—"You belong to Lord Lascelyne?" said I—"Shew me where your master is."

The man looked considerably confused, and hesitated for a little.

"I carry the answer myself," said I—"lead the way—walk."

He did not dare to shuffle any longer.—"My lord," said he, "is but at the end of the street."

"Very well," said I, with a smile, "that is just as it should be. Stay here a moment, and I shall return."

"My lord bade me come back with the answer, sir."

"Ay, ay, stay where you are, my lad; we shall be all with you directly—" and I pushed him into an anti-room, and was instantly beyond my door.

I found him at the corner, close to the turnstile.—"My Lord Lascelyne," said I, bowing to the ground—"I fear your lordship has been early disturbed this morning. Will it please you to take a turn in the park there—the air is better than here in this narrow street; and we shall talk over our little matters more easily, perhaps."

Lascelyne followed me in silence—I walked very rapidly, I promise you—until we were fairly among the trees. I halted, and flinging my cloak on the turf, bade him choose for himself.

"Swords!" said he—"two swords, Mr Wald!

—I was not prepared for this, sir,—I assure you I had no such intention."

"Choose, my lord, choose," I answered; "the blades are good, both of them."

"Sir," said he, and he drew himself up in a very stately fashion—I must say that for Lascelyne—"Sir, I refuse no man's challenge; but neither do I accept it but upon certain conditions—name your quarrel, sir, and your friend."

"My quarrel!"

"Yes, sir, your quarrel—Do you pretend to say that you have any rights over my child?—It was that only my letter referred to."

"Oh no, my Lord Lascelyne, not to that only.—Come, come, here is no time for trifling; choose."

"I insist upon hearing what is your quarrel, Mr Wald."

"*My* quarrel?—You sign yourself, '*Wald* Lascelyne,' I think, too?—Come, my lord, draw."

"And wherefore?—Speak plainly, at all events."

"In me, sir, you see the representative of an insulted blood—that is not all, but that is enough—choose, and choose quickly."

"Why, sir, if you think that you have any particular title to fight me because I have happened to have some disagreement with your cousin, that is well enough in its way, and I sha'nt be the man to baulk you—but not here, nor thus, if you please.—I must have my boy, sir, first; and, secondly, I must place him in hands that I happen to approve of—that's my fancy, sir;—and then, Mr Wald, if you have no very particular objection, I rather prefer going through such things in the most received fashion—in short, I choose among my own friends, ere I pick among your blades—that also is my fancy."

"Friends!—Friends to see *us*!—Seconds, forsooth!"

"Ay, sir, seconds;' tis the rule, and I have no passion for singularities, whatever may be your taste."

"Come, come—when you next fall out with some fop about a pointer, or a dancer, my lord—some pirouetting dancer—this puppy legislation will do finely. I thought we were serious."

"Serious! partly so, partly not, Mr Wald. I consider, (but I won't baulk you, though,) I con-

sider this as rather a laughable hurry of yours, Mr Wald."

"Laughable? ha!—was that your word?"

"Ay, laughable—extremely laughable—quite *hors des regles*."

"The *regles*!—Madam Francoise has taught you that pretty word, too.—Come, come, do you wish me to spit on you—to kick you—to crush you—to hew you down like a calf?"

"Sir, you are a ruffian: but give me your swords——"

How beautifully we went through all the parade!—how calmly we proved the distance!—how exactly we took our attitudes! You would have sworn we were two professed fencers—and yet for me—I knew almost nothing of it—I had never tried the naked sword before but once; and you know how—

But after the first minute of ceremony, what a joke was all this!—I rushed upon him, sir, as if I had been some horned brute. I had no more thought of guards and passes than if I had been a bison. He stabbed me thrice—thrice through the arm—clean through the arm—*that* was my

guard—but what signified this? I felt his blade as if it had been a gnat, a nothing. At last my turn came—I spitted him through the heart—I rushed on till the hilt stopped me.—I did not draw my steel out of him.—I spurned him off it with my foot.

"Lie there, rot there, beast—!" a single groan, and his eye fixed.

The Stagyrite says you cannot hate the dead:—He never hated.——I dipped my shoe in his blood.

I rushed home as if I had had wings; but my courage forsook me at the threshold.

I entered the room where Katharine was—(she was still seated there, her child on her knee, waiting for me)—I entered it with my cloak wrapped about me. I sat down at some little distance from them—and in silence.

"Matthew," said she, "where have you been?—what have you been about?—your looks were strange before—but now——"

I drew my cloak closer about me.

"Oh! Matthew—your eyes!—will you never compose yourself?"

"Never, Kate."

"But now you were softening.—Come hither, Matthew.—Oh! try if you can weep."

I drew out my sword from below the cloak—I held out the red blade before me—the drops had not all baked yet—one or two fell upon the floor.

"Speak, Matthew! what is this?—Speak!—Ha! God of Mercy! there is blood upon that sword."

"Ay, blood, my cousin—blood."

"My husband! my Lascelyne!"—I heard no more. Heavens and earth! that I should write this down! One shriek—one—just one!

Fainted?—swooned?—Dead! oh! dead.—I remember no more.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I KNOW, I feel, that your kindness would willingly spare me, if it could. I know that you would fain have me preserve secrets, dark, for the most part, as those of death and the grave, even from you. At this moment, however, it so happens, that nothing can give me any additional uneasiness.

Here am I sitting in my own comfortable easy-chair, in my own snug library;—a bright fire is blazing at my side;—everything is light and warmth about me. Old I am, yet I feel strength in every fibre. My perceptions are as clear as ever they were in the morning of my days. I can walk, ride, read or write, as nimbly as if I were a man of five and twenty years. I drink no wine when by myself; but a bottle of water stands near me on

the table. Here, sir, I drink your health.—I have drained my glass to the bottom.

And yet, it is I that can look back upon that wilderness of horrors! These are the very limbs that were bound and chained in yon dreary cell;—these are the very eyes that used to watch and curse that one dim straggling day-beam, descending from an immeasurable height above me upon those dark slimy stones;—this is the frame that cowered and shivered in yon corner. It was I that raved up and down that dungeon like a new-caught lion;—it was I that bellowed to the moon;—it was I that coiled myself up like a trampled worm, whenever yonder low iron grating was opened, and the hard-faced barbarian stood, whip in hand, before me.

What grovelling fears—what icy sweats—what terrible dreams—more terrible even than the waking terrors of madness! What a thirst, and yet what a dread, for the approach of sleep—what dead blanks of total oblivion—what agonies of remembrance—what furious rushing again into the out-stretched arms of ever-watchful Despair!

To be nailed on the summit of a precipice high as the clouds, but no clouds in the sky; all clear and bright above; all around gulphs, and measureless plains of snow, dazzling and glaring;—to sit gazing with hot brazen eyeballs, and see some white mass moving near me, and then suddenly the great, black, clumsy bear crawling on—on—with his gaping, slavering jaws. The groan of the fearful brute—the hollow, hungry howl of his half-sleepy yawn—the convulsive struggle—the headlong leap—down—down into the fathomless abyss——

To lie battered on the burning rock in the midst of a world of woods—glorious dark green woods—but no shade for me—the tumult of the ever-sounding cataract in my ear, but no drop for that dry, glowing tongue—those black and furred lips. To feel the flies crawling and nibbling all over breast and limb, with that eternal busy hum of glittering wings, and the piercing of a thousand little needles—to see one's self eaten away—to trace, with steady eyes, the widening of the fester

—to see them working out and in, as in a hive—to see the green creatures dancing up and down your bared nerve—riding on your stretched vein, and powerless to move even one fibre—a self-loathsome mass of corrupted clay—rotting, but not dead—a living jelly—oh! how exquisitely, how intensely living!——

Ha! how glorious to be thus mounted. On, on, I say, thou most magnificent of Arabs! The snow will chill your hoofs if we linger—they shall have a warm bath, though, and that right soon. Come on, I say—advance, ye blackening squadrons!—Ay, flap all your banners, and blow your trumpets—I love the sound of them. Down, down I hew you! Do you think to wound me?—Strike, then, with a thousand swords—ha! I have been steeped, like Achilles, in Lethe; but heel and all, ye ruffians! heel and all!—Maces! straws! this skull is fire—can your hammers cut the flame? These are splendid cuirasses—ha! do they shiver so easily? Ho! ho! falcon, dost thou scream? and thou too, black one? Come, little raven, you may

come down now—here is blood enough for you to wade in.——.

Such are thousands of the fragments my mind has been able to retain of its then shattered image—Gleams—snatches out of the waste of blackness.

A softer, in so far,—at all events, a more connected dream, floats at this moment over my memory. Let me arrest the vision. Remain for an instant, thou little mountain-lake, and let no wind disturb the image of that old castle upon thy calm cold bosom!

How dead is the stillness of this water—how deep, and yet how clear—not one weed, one ripple, to intercept the view—every pebble at the bottom might be counted—'tis sheer rock here in the middle—How deep may it be, old man?—did you never sound it—you that have ferried it so many hundreds of times? You shake your head, my friend—'tis no matter—What is this pavement here upon the brink?—how deeply the stones are

worne!—Many strange tales, I daresay, have been told about this old castle of yours—Your mill, I see, is partly built against the old wall—The great wheel stands idle to-day—will you climb the tower with me?

Ah! this has been a grand place in its day, too: What windows—what galleries—what immense fire-places—what a roar the flame must have gone up with—what odd staircases—what dark strange passages—heavens! how gigantic a plant is the ivy—what broad leaves, when they are not troubled with the wall—An apple-tree, too!—Here, in the very heart of the hall—just where the table stood—What a dungeon this must have been—the lid rested on that ledge, no doubt—Ha! I see the rings in the wall yet—what a dark hole for a poor creature—that little slit is a mere mockery—Is there any way of getting down?—I think one might venture the leap;—but you smile—how to get up again?—ay, that's the difficulty—well, we'll stay where we are—How black the wall is on that side—the rafters, also, have left rotten ends here and there—they, also, are black enough—Fire?—I understand you—quite burnt out?—

How long ago was all this ruin?—you can't say—well, well.

What a beautiful view from this gap—here, stand beside me, there is room enough for us both—What a fine descending sweep to the sea, the silver sea—How clearly one sees all those hills beyond—How richly the coast is wooded; but here you are rather bare, I think—Your turf has never an oak to shade it—How green and luxuriant is the old pasture grass. And more ruins too, I think. Why, you are rich in ruins here. Is this another castle? if so, methinks they must have been good neighbours. A church, say you?—Ay, the chapel—I understand. Will you walk so far down the hill with me, old man? I should like to see their chapel also, since I have seen their hall. Why, you are a very comfortable-looking old lad—who knows but if you had lived in those days they might have made a monk of you; you would have looked nobly in the cowl—better, I assure you, than the white hat; and better dinners too I will be sworn—but you are contented—you thrive as it is. You have a cheerful cottage here under the tower. How prettily your smoke curls

up along that bartizan! I wish you had a few old trees about you, 'tis the only thing you want.—Cut down? What! all of them at once?—Well, this was not very like a lord; but they can't take the water away, and that is beauty enough. As for shelter, why, after all, the tower is between you and the northern blast. You hear it whistling loud enough, no doubt, but what signifies that when the door is barred, and the fire bright, and the pot singing? You may e'en laugh at the wind.

The old man descended from the tower with me, and walked by my side down the hill towards the chapel. There was a light airy wind now, and we could see the sea beyond, quite through the archway. "How entire is this!" said I; "how clean and neat everything about it is! How cheerily the breeze sweeps through this vaulted passage!—how white the stones are beneath our feet!"

"That," said he, opening a door on the one side, "that, sir, is the chapel itself. You may walk in, if you have a mind."

"How perfect is this too!" said I, uncovering

myself as I stepped across the threshold—"No decay at all here, my friend; if the glass were put into the windows again, they might sing mass here to-morrow as well as ever. The brasses on the pavement, however, are a little dimmed for want of feet to polish them. These old knights have few to trouble them now with pacing over their graves."

I walked about, examining monument after monument, and spelling out as I best could the inscriptions and the blazons. What these last were I cannot remember, but they were all the same arms.

"And here," said I, "my friend, here is one of a kind rather singular—quite out upon the floor by itself. And stop—is not this wood that they have laid by way of lid over the marble?—'tis so white with age that I took it for stone too at the first. You should push this off, I think. It only hides the top of the carved work."

I was approaching closer to it, when the old miller said, with a very grave and solemn sort of smile upon his face, "Nay, sir, you must not touch that part of it—'tis not the custom. You had better leave it as it is."

"Why, what folly is this?—You may be sure such a fair tomb must have something pretty on its own cover.—I must see it, my friend."

"Nay, sir, you may do what you please; but I warn you, that you will wish it undone afterwards. You will only frighten yourself."

"Fright! old boy," said I; "nay, then, here for the adventure."

I touched the edge of the timber, and found it rise easily;—but, at that instant—at that very moment when I raised it—I heard a little, feeble cry come out from below it. I leaped back, and cast my eyes upon the old man. He met my look without changing his.—And then, from the same tomb, came three distinct sobs—the same tomb, but not the same voice—and all was again silent.

"Old man," said I, "what is this? Can the dead people utter sounds like these from their coffins?—Surely, I thought there had been rest in the grave, old man——"

"Ah, sir," said he, moving now at length from the door-way, in which he had all this while been standing,—"we cannot tell what strange things are in this world; the quick and the dead have

their marvels.—But you have broken the spell, sir—you may lift the lid now—there will be nothing more to alarm you. They never do so, but at the first touch."

His coming so near me gave me courage, and I touched the wood again. No sound followed;—and I moved it gently—quite off its place.

"A pall," said I, "old man!—a velvet pall! —They have left this tomb strangely unfinished, man.—Might one, perchance, remove this too?"

"Sir," says the grave-eyed, yet cheerful-looking senior, "you may do so if you like; but I will tell you what is the truth of it first.—The last lord of the old family—he that lived in our castle, and owned all the country round this place—had but one daughter. A bad, cruel man came, and he married the lady, and became lord of the land too. She had a child, sir; and he, they say, could not bear the sight of it, nor of her, then:—and he drowned them yonder in our lake. That cry that you heard was from the baby; and the three sobs, they were from the mother. They always do so—just as when they were murdered, it is thought—whenever any one touches

their tomb.—But we have been used to this all our days, sir, and we make little of it now.—If you wish to see them you may lift the cloth."

I did so, and beheld a glass cover, dim and dusty. The old man took the corner of the pall, and, rubbing it a little, said, "Now, sir, here you may see them both, quite entire; they have been so beautifully embalmed.—Look——"

"Oh, Joanne! that white face once again!—"

I screamed in my agony, and awoke——

"Here, sir," cries the Keeper,—"here's a pretty-behaved gentleman, truly!—If it were night it were less matter; but no screaming and hooting here in the day-time.—Here, squire, get up! Do you feel this—and this—and this? If you wish to halloo so much, we must e'en try to give you some excuse for your noise.—And here's the barber come to shave your head again. Do you think to frighten the barber, Mr Squire?——"

LETTER TO P. R. Esq.

The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife,—they see
A happy youth: and their old age
Is beautiful and free.

But we are press'd by heavy laws,
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

WORDSWORTH.

LETTER TO P. R. Esq.

(ENCLOSING THE FOREGOING MEMOIRS.)



Such, dear R——, is the account which our old friend has bequeathed to us of that early part of his life, concerning which neither you nor I ever heard him speak. With the exception of a few passages, which I have found it necessary to strike out of the last two or three chapters, (especially the last of all,) you have the Memoir exactly as he left it in his cabinet.

Why he finished so abruptly, his letter does not say. Whether he did so in consequence of having been painfully agitated in the composition of the concluding pages which you have just read, and therefore fearing to proceed farther; or whether

the many years of which he has said nothing had really appeared to him, in his morbid retrospect, incapable of furnishing us with any materials, either of amusement or instruction, I am somewhat at a loss to determine. You are quite as well qualified to make guesses upon the matter as I am.

I think you will now have little difficulty in confessing that I was right, and you wrong, in the dispute we have so frequently renewed concerning him. I certainly had formed at first, and retained for a considerable time, an opinion pretty much the same with your own. That a man who possessed health and bodily strength to an extent so very uncommon in people of his years, who took so much exercise daily, who almost every year travelled several thousands of miles, and to the last thought little more of a trip to Paris than of a walk into the city—and, above all, who was, whenever any of us met him in society, the soul of the party, —light, buoyant, airy, and cheerful, to the distancing, not unfrequently, even of our own boyish spirits—that this man should have been in reality the habitual victim of the darkest and most melancholy reflections, was, undoubtedly, a thing not

likely to be suspected by observers so young and thoughtless as we both were when we first knew Mr Wald.

The notion that such was the fact—that our "grey-haired man of glee" (as you used to call him) was in reality the secret slave of despondency—this notion did certainly find its way by degrees into my mind. The very silence which so lively a companion preserved touching so large a portion of his own life, was perhaps the circumstance that chiefly influenced me in the adoption of the opinion which you always continued to controvert.

Was his merriment, then, a matter of mere affectation?—I believe nothing of the sort. I believe that when we were fairly with him—when the system of seclusion had been fairly broken in upon, the dinner ordered, the cellar ransacked, the company assembled—our friend was exactly what he seemed. I believe he, upon such occasions, entered most thoroughly into all the enjoyments of those whom he had summoned about him. With what an air did he decant a bottle of that old, that antediluvian, green seal,—with what sprightliness did he not call upon some of us youngsters

for a song,—with what festivity did he not join in the chorus,—with what solemn waggery did he not propose his fanciful toasts!

But then how seldom did such scenes occur,—who ever heard of his giving more than one, two, or, at most, three dinners in the twelvemonth? And why was this? He was rich far, very far, beyond his expenditure; his generosity we all knew. With his establishment it could have cost him no personal trouble to prepare for a party of that sort —and, God knows, none of us were likely to refuse his invitation.—Why, then, did the circle, the only circle, assemble so seldom around his charming board? And why, in like manner, did he, who spent half of every day out of doors, and walked and rode as freely and boldly as any man of thirty, why did he never, on any occasion whatever, dine abroad? You are aware, I know, that —although the family became his friends almost immediately on our return from India—he never sat even at my father's table but once—and that was on my wedding-day. And after I was married, he that was so fond of my wife, and so very much attached to my children—such is the fact,

he never once broke bread, nor tasted one glass of wine, under my roof.

You remember how often we all wondered that he who was almost in everything so much of the Scotsman, to say nothing of his property lying entirely there, should, among all his rambles, never visit his native country.

You may, therefore, imagine how much it surprised us, when we heard that the tour of this summer had carried him northwards.

He had called at my house when I happened not to be at home. He told my wife that he was to set off next morning on his usual summer's excursion, but without mentioning in what direction. I called on him next day, but he was already gone off. His servants said, they believed Mr Wald was going as far as York.

I thought nothing more of it until (this might be about six weeks afterwards) I received a letter from his old valet, stating that Mr Wald was very ill indeed, and that he (the valet) earnestly hoped I would proceed, without delay, to the place where he was lying,—Blackford.

I set off immediately, and travelled night and

day without intermission; but I was too late. He was not dead when I arrived, but he had been for many hours speechless, and apparently quite insensible. I think, however, he did know me. I think I cannot be mistaken as to this. His eyes—those finest of all masculine eyes I ever saw—remained fixed upon me—yes, until they were fixed for ever. At all events, I had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing that he expired without pain, and of closing his eye-lids. We buried him with his fathers—a very striking old cemetery, I assure you—piles and piles of leaden coffins all about, the undermost ones, of course, beat quite flat with the weight of the superveners, and one or two rude but highly-curious monuments in the midst. There we laid him—the last of the right line.

His disease was, I believe, nothing but apoplexy. He had wandered out by himself, and was found, after many hours had elapsed, lying in a state of perfect stupor, beside a little waterfall in one of the glens among the hills behind his house.

The same noble disposition which led him to give up the possession of his wife's estate (although the law of Scotland made it his for his life, if he

pleased,) the moment he recovered the possession of his faculties—the same noble and generous disposition breathes, I assure you, in every line of his testament. He has provided, in the handsomest manner, for all his old domestics and dependents; and yet never, I believe, was master or patron more sincerely lamented than he, to this hour is, by the whole of these.

I am sure, when you come to London again, you will feel what a blank has been created. Among other matters, he has left me his house here. I went into it the other day, but shall certainly not do so again. To see his stuffed chair standing in the usual corner—his walking-cane resting against it—his flute hung up on the old nail—all the books about—his paper knife remaining in the heart of Candide—two or three Couriers and Cobbetts still lying upon the table—I confess all this was too much for me. The Hogarths, you know, are yours; I shall have them packed up forthwith. The set is certainly a very fine one.

What a fortunate thing it is for me that Lord Lascelyne has no son. If he had had but one, I should have been cut out, for a time at least, as

the entail only prevents the two estates from being actually held at the same moment by the same person.

As it is, I mean to go down and take possession next month, in all form ; and the sooner you come to Blackford, the better.

Yours always,

J. W. R.

London, August, 1 16.

THE END

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

O142

